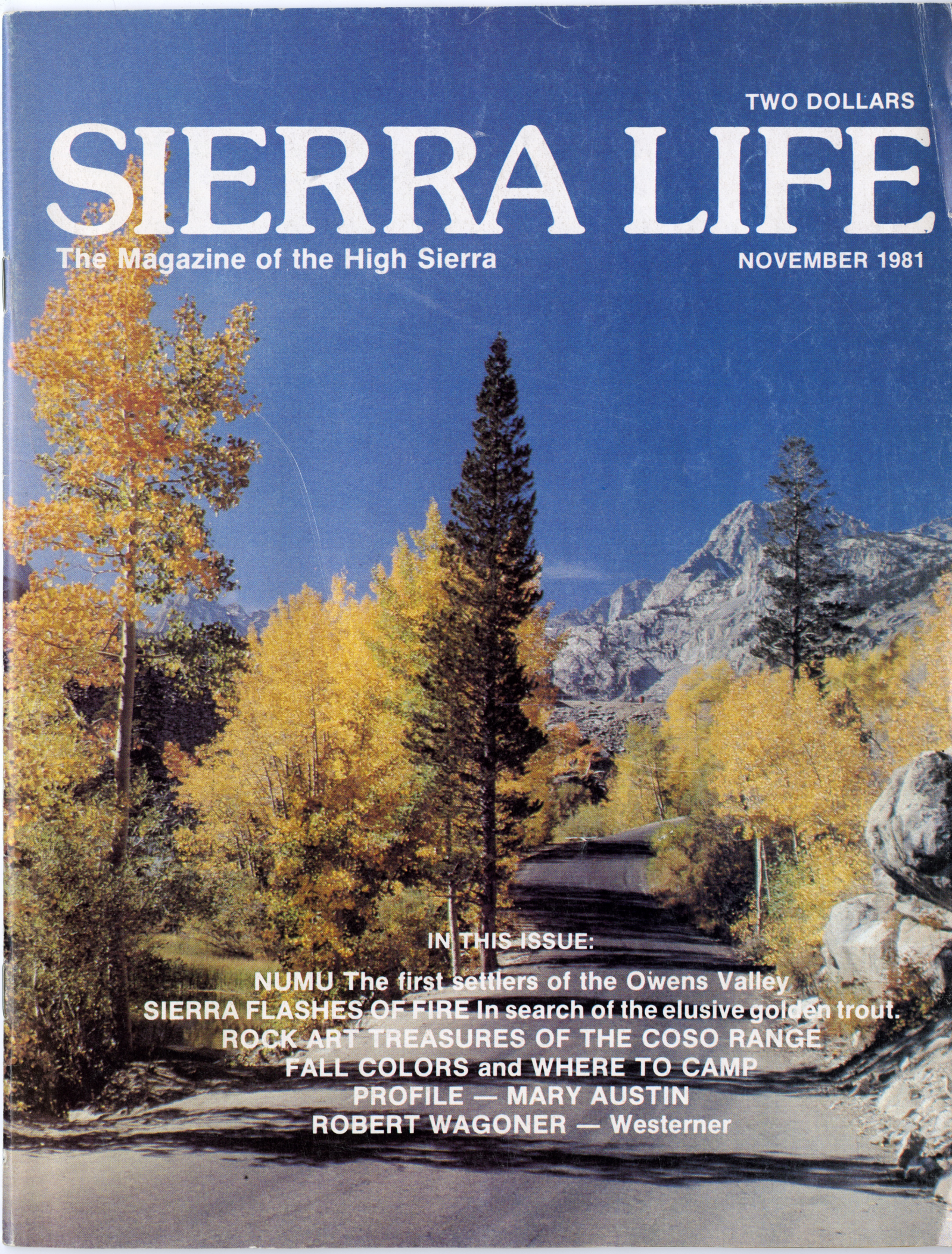
TWO DOLLARS
SIERRA LIFE
The Magazine of the High Sierra
NOVEMBER 1981
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SIERRA FLASHES OF FIRE In search of the elusive golden trout.
ROCK ART TREASURES OF THE COSO RANGE
FALL COLORS and WHERE TO CAMP
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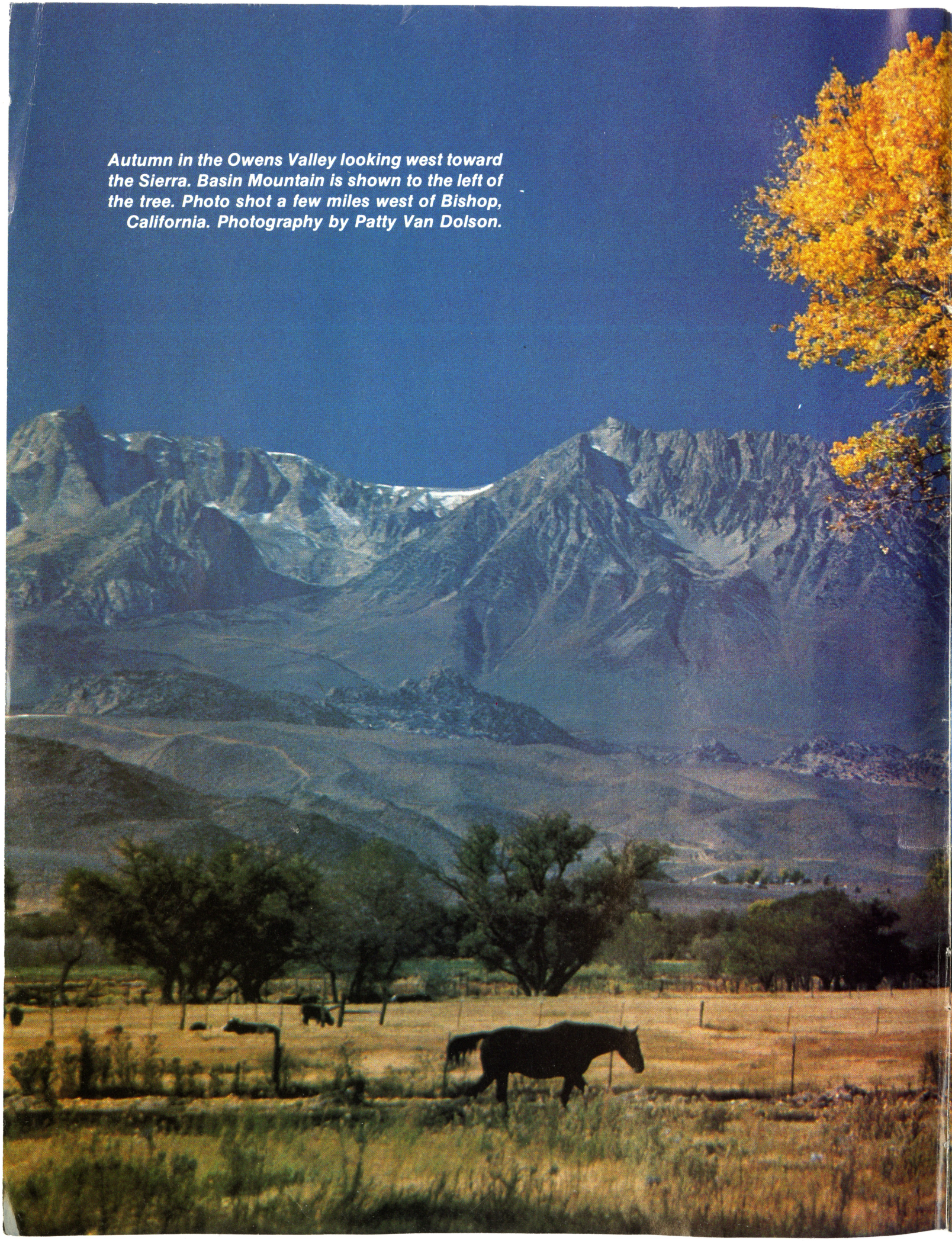
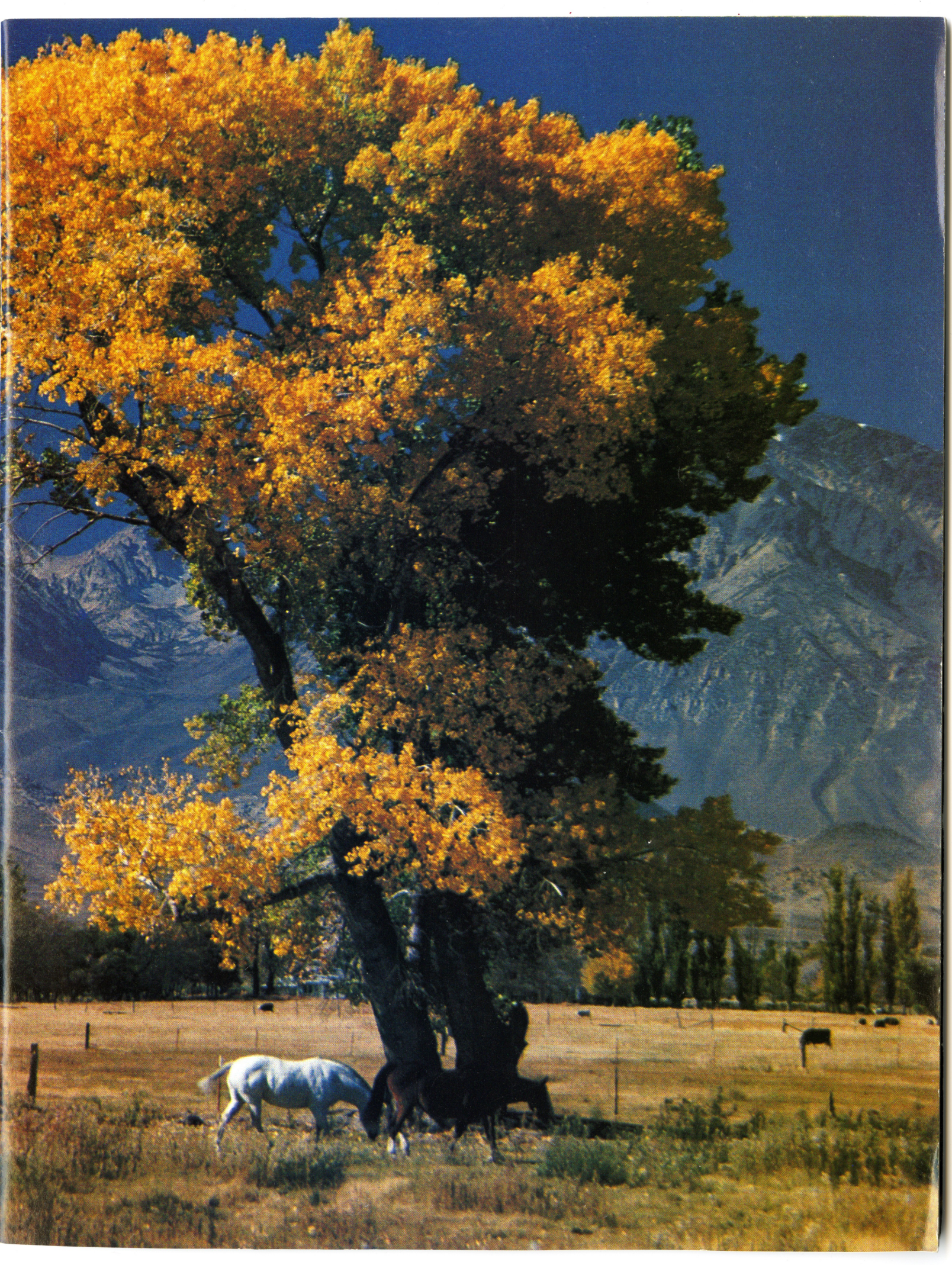


Autumn in the Owens Valley looking west toward the Sierra. Basin Mountain is shown to the left of the tree. Photo shot a few miles west of Bishop, California. Photography by Patty Van Dolson.



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From the Publisher . . .

Autumn is a special time of year in the High Sierra. The brilliant colors of the aspen announce the imminent arrival of winter as nature prepares for the months ahead.

Our first issue of Sierra Life focuses on this season of changes as we look at the earliest recorded inhabitants of the Owens Valley, and how their lives were intimately connected with the seasons.

We also feature Mary Austin who shared the beauty of the High Sierra with so many people who might never have otherwise experienced it.

The fiery colors of the Sierra aren't just in the trees! The golden trout compete with the aspens as flashiest gold of the Sierra. We tell you all about these "fiesty fish" in this issue.

Our staff is committed to bringing you the diversity of life found in the High Sierra. It is an exciting place to be. We hope to share with you our enthusiasm for this beautiful region.

We will cover the entire Sierra — from Tehachapi to Mt. Shasta, both east and west sides. We'll take you everywhere from backcountry trails to long forgotten ghost towns. We'll tell you about the history and geology of the area, and keep you informed about trends for the future.

Sierra Life is your magazine! We invite your comments and suggestions.

Sandie Pramann
Publisher

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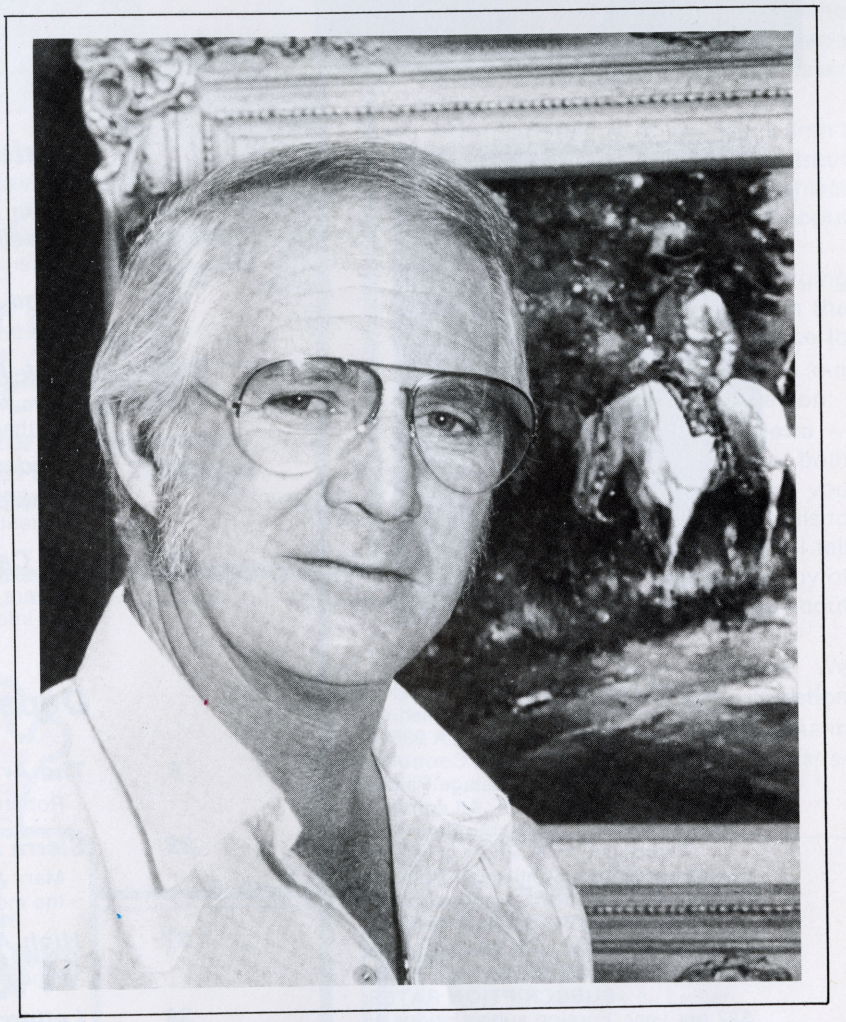
Our Cover . . .

Patty Van Dolson, Sierra Life Chief Photographer, takes us on the road to autumn in the High Sierra. This shot was taken near Lake Sabrina, a few miles west of Bishop, California.

Patty's High Sierra scenics appearing in Sierra Life are available matted and ready for frames. Please contact our office for details.

The Arts . . .

Robert Wagoner . . .



by Jane Fisher

In Sierra Country, The Old West lives on in all its wild and woolly wonder. There is a sophisticated playfulness about it, but never discount the serious undertone of reality. There is a pioneer ambience in the dress, the love of horses and mountains, the parades, the everyday life. Artisans of every genre and discipline come to study, to record, and to interpret, not only because of the beauty and apparent simplicity of the life, but to live it because they believe in it.

"I hitched any old way I could, summer and winter. I climbed, fished, rode, and finally raised my kids up here."

"I've never missed a year coming to the Sierra since I was thirteen," says Robert Wagoner, a painter rapidly gaining international attention. "I hitched any old way I could, summer and winter. I climbed, fished, rode, and finally raised my kids up here."

Wagoner may be a typical example of the western artists who translate their love of that lifestyle into every facet of living, but his work is far from typical. He is a mood artist, a magnificent colorist whose oils and water colors are shown and sold through prestigious galleries in the American Southwest, commanding thousands of dollars.

You'll find his work in private showings by the Texas Art Gallery in Dallas where collectors shop for work of increasing value potential, and in Trailside Galleries in Scottsdale, Arizona, and Jackson Hole, Wyoming. His paintings, fine art lithographs and Christmas cards are seen at Leaning Tree Publishing Company Museum in Boulder, Colorado, and the Texas Art Press; the Pepper Tree Ranch exhibits his work, and he is sought

Please turn to page 20

Westerner

". . . watching the waterfalls coming off the high peaks, listening to it. I store these impressions away like a squirrel and draw on them at a later time."

John Langenheim, our pilot and guide, outsmarts the golden as the insert at left attests.

Photographed in the Golden Trout Wilderness by Patty Van Dolson

SIERRA FLASHES OF FIRE

by Greg Leiber

The elusive golden trout will give even an expert angler a run for his money!

There are challenges in every sport, and fishing is no exception. Those of us who have spent an entire morning trying to entice a fish home for supper can appreciate the subtle skills needed to be a truly successful angler. Patience is indeed a virtue when fishing, as well as having the ability to out-smart your quarry. And while scientists say that fish definitely do not have the gray matter needed to reason, many fishermen will say that the golden trout will give even an expert angler a run for his money.

In the rugged southeastern Sierra Nevada there is over 300,000 acres of pristine mountain land called the Golden Trout Wilderness. Congress saw fit to lay aside this area about five years ago, recognizing the unique qualities of the golden trout and its native habitat. The California State Fish is mainly found in this area, and if there is a Mecca for freshwater fishermen, the Golden Trout Wilderness is it.

Golden trout are high-altitude fish, found above 8,500 feet in the deep-blue lakes and sparkling streams of the Sierra. The theory is that the goldens are descendants of rainbow trout that made their way up tributaries of the Kern River in prehistoric times. Glacial action cut off the early streams from the Kern and the fish slowly evolved to become the underwater flashes of fire we know today.

Even though this wilderness was largely inaccessable until recent years, the goldens were close to extinction earlier this century, earning them a spot on the threatened species list.

The Department of Fish and Game stock the mountain lakes by airplane, releasing thousands of tiny trout fingerlings at a time. These efforts have proven successful as the golden trout are again thriving.

Fishermen themselves will never be a significant threat to the golden trout. As the goldens evolved their distinct gold and red markings, they devoloped into very smart fish.

"They're the cagiest trout around . . ."

"They're the cagiest trout around," according to Blake Jones, Sierra Life Hunting and Fishing Editor. "I've seen people who have no trouble catching their limit of rainbow and brown come back empty-handed after a day of fishing for golden trout."

Advance preparation is one of the keys to successful golden angling. A bamboo pole with a hook and line attached will simply not do the job when you're after the spirited goldens.

The best time to fish for goldens is in September and October, or when the lake ice thaws, usually around July. Most goldens are caught between 10,000 and 13,000 feet, and you have to be up early in the morning if you want to catch you're limit. Goldens are especially active between first day-light and sun-up.

Blake suggests that you carry as many different lures as possible. You can never be sure what the goldens will go for, and their diet is as varied as the insects that inhabit the mountains.

Above ten thousand feet, golden trout seem to prefer a species of grasshopper with red wings. However, if you happen to be below that elevation, yellow-winged and black-winged grasshoppers are best. A selection of lures resembling these golden trout delicacies will give you an edge if the fish are being picky.

"Kick the brush at the side of your fishing spot and see what color insects fly from the bushes," Blake advises. "Notice what kind of bugs are being eaten by the trout. Are they bumble bees, honey bees or mosquitoes? Then go for the

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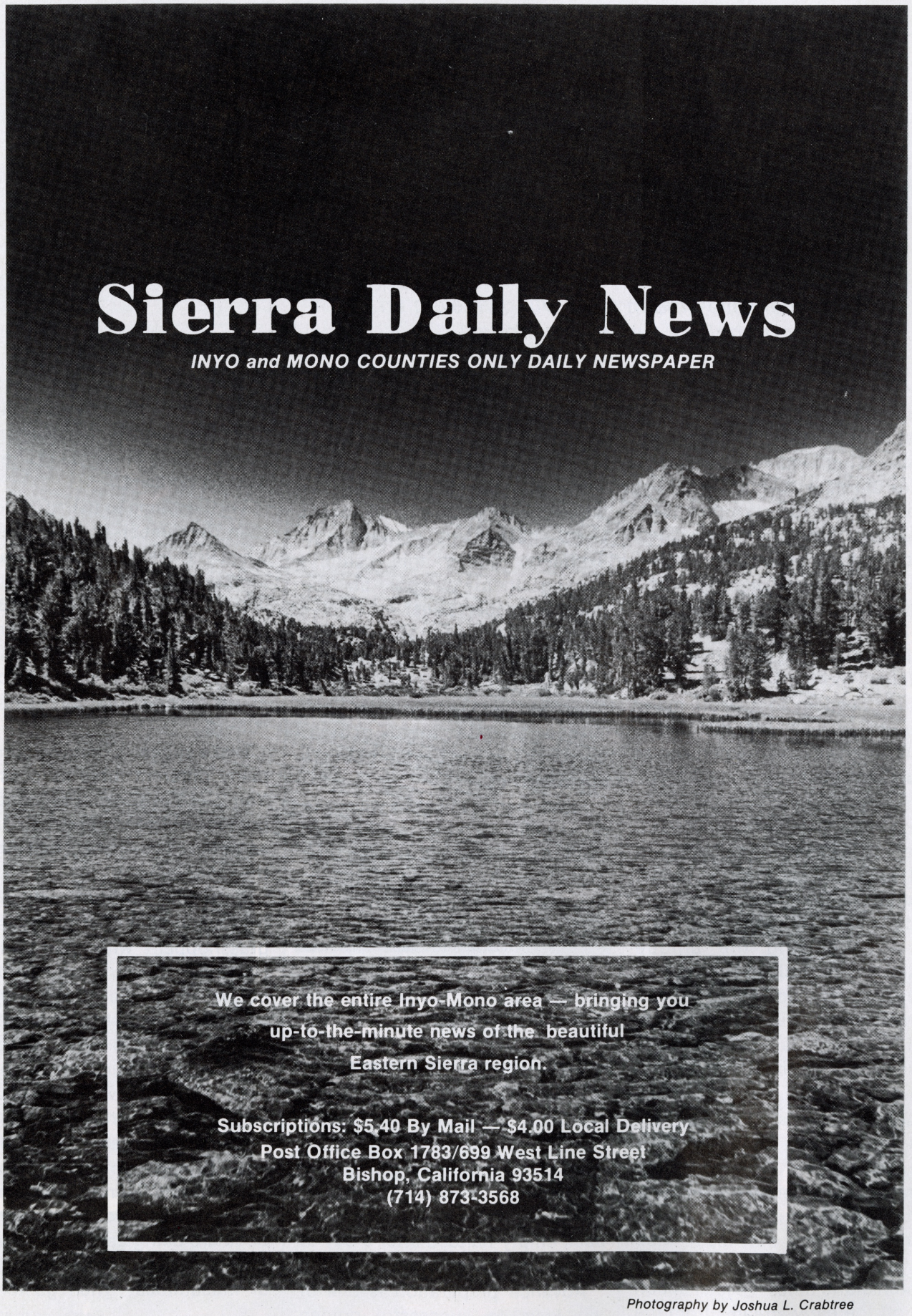
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Photography by Joshua L. Crabtree

Flashes of Fire *continued from page 9*

lure resembling the goldens' chosen fare."

Blake says that he has good luck using a very small Panther Martin yellow-body bucktail lure. If you want to try bait fishing, consider using a No. 16 hook on a three foot, one lb. leader, and use only the head of the worm to cover the hook. Small lures and hooks are essential since goldens are generally smaller than their rainbow and brown cousins.

"It's the skill of your wrist that counts . . ."

In the end, success is based on the skill of the fisherman. "It's the skill of your wrist that counts," Blake confides, "And whether you can make the lure look like a live bug in the water." If low-land fishing has lost its allure, or if you are looking for a considerable challenge of your fishing skills, golden trout may be your cup of tea.

It can be just as challenging to get to the Golden Trout Wilderness as it is to catch one once you're there. There are no roads into this part of the Sierra, not even for four-wheel drive vehicles. The trails that lead from the Owens Valley are rugged and steep, with a gain in elevation between 3,000 and 5,000 feet. Backpacking is for those who are fit and experienced. Mountain weather can change at the drop of a hat and you can have real trouble if you're not prepared. Most of the pack stations that rent trail stock are located somewhat to the north of the area. And, unless you're used to it, an hour of bouncing on the back of a horse or mule may have you walking anyway.

No one ever said that pilgrimages are easy. The best spots in the wilderness are usually those farthest from the roads. Fortunately, there is an alternative way to reach this fishing Eden. It

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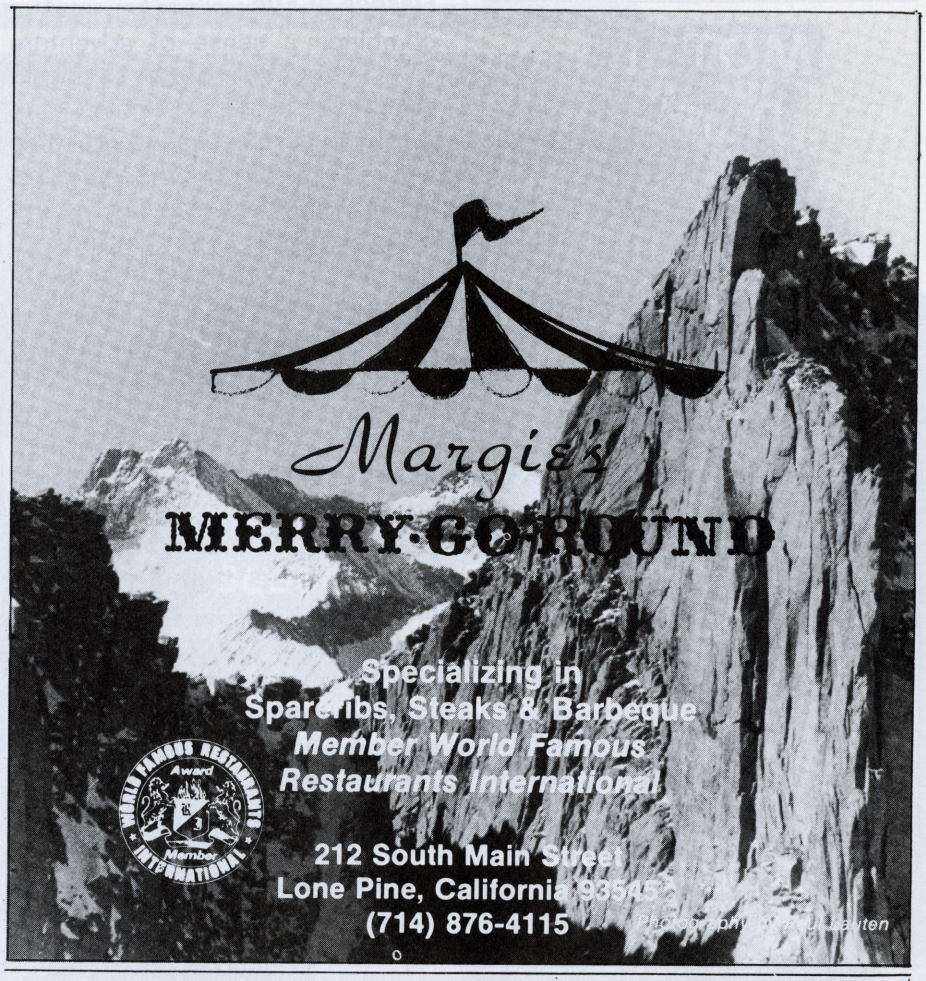

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Flashes of Fire *continued from page 11*

combines a sense of adventure with the comfort of not having to walk or ride a lot of hard miles. And, if you would rather spend your time fishing instead of getting there, this is definitely the way to go. There is a slight hitch though — you have to be willing to leave Mother Earth and fly over the Sierra Crest.

John Langenheim operates a flying service located in Lone Pine. He is the only pilot who regularly flies into Tunnel Meadow, located in the heart of the Golden Trout Wilderness. At 9,100 feet, the Tunnel Meadow airstrip is possibly the highest regular landing spot in the continental United States.

John has been flying in the Sierra Nevada for years, ferrying hunters and fishermen to spots not easily reached otherwise. He has the experience and knowledge a mountain pilot needs, plus self-confidence that rubs off on his passengers.

The flight is an exhilarating experience, allowing views of the majestic Sierra Nevada and Owens Valley that are possible only from an airplane. The usual route heads south from Lone Pine, and then west towards a pass in the Sierra wall known as Portuguese Gap. You can see 150 miles in every direction, and the High Sierra peaks are easily visible. Eleven thousand foot, Muah Mountain looms to the south, while Mount Whitney is seen to the north. The grandeur of the Range of Light makes you feel very small as the mountains pass beneath the plane.

While ardent backpackers claim the only way to see the Sierra is on foot, air travel is a close second in my book. There is something very special about flying over the rugged granite spires, giving a totally new and different dimension to the Sierra experience. It is an opportunity for adventure that should not be missed.

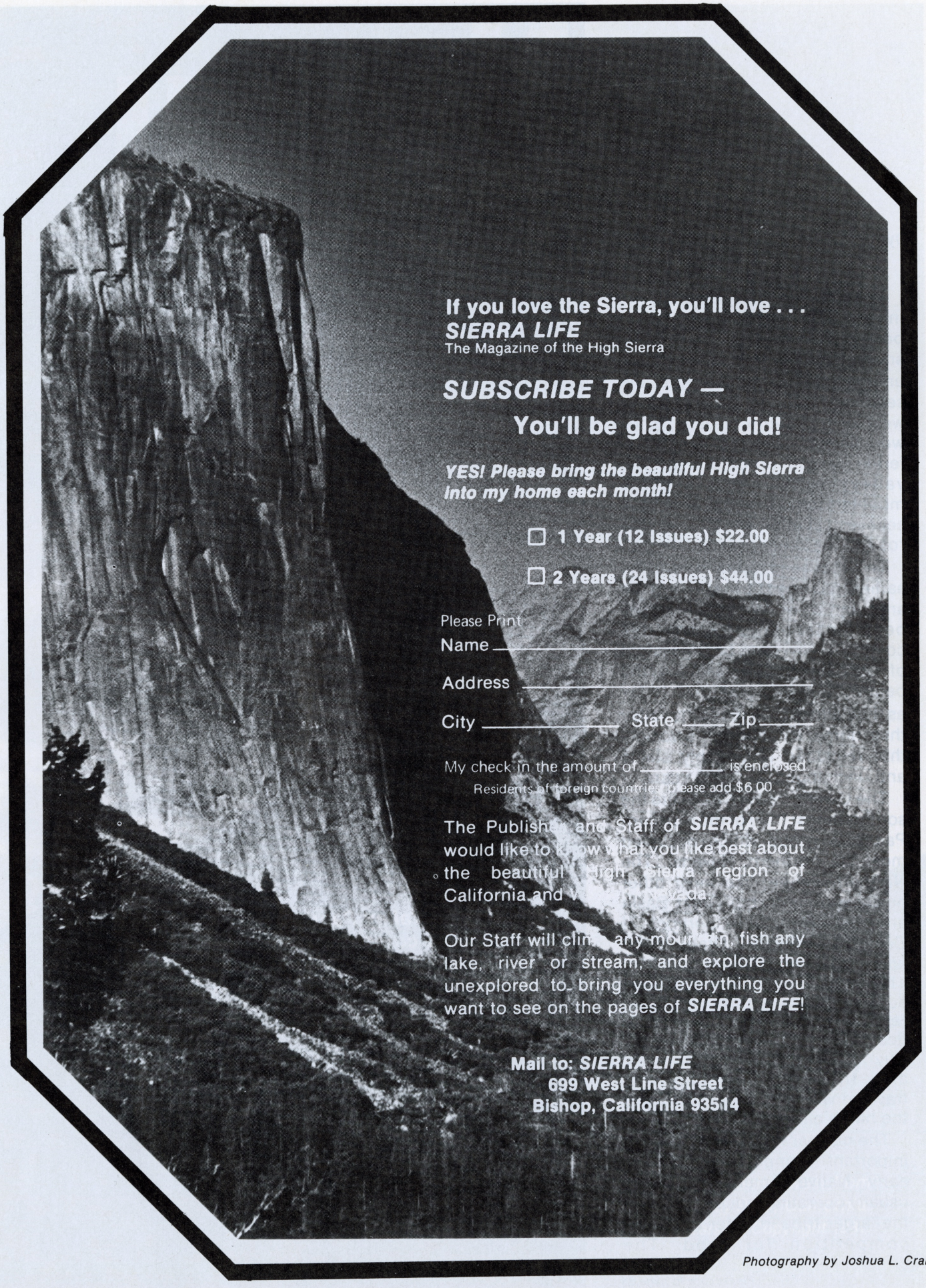
Ater passing over the highest part of the mountain chain, the plane heads southwest above Bullfrog Meadow and then on to Tunnel Meadow. John makes landing look easy as he drifts toward the strip for a surprisingly gentle touch down.

Once you have arrived at Tunnel Meadow there are a number of options for the intrepid fisherman. Tent cabins are available near the airstrip and two major golden trout streams are located within two miles of the camp. Pack animals are also available and can be rented by the day. Or you can have a guide take you on horse-back to a chosen spot, leave you, and then return for you on another day.

Backpackers can choose between flying out of the wilderness or hiking out. Hikers can begin their journies at the airstrip and avoid the possible lack of wilderness permits at Whitney Portal and Cottonwood. Permits for the Golden Trout Wilderness are available at the Lone Pine airport.

The Golden Trout Wilderness offers high adventure for those who seek it out. The magnificent solitude of the High Sierra combined with great fishing, are the makings for an experience you will never forget.

Information On Flying Service:
Eastern Sierra Flying Service, Box 993, Lone Pine, CA 93545. Telephone: (714) 876-4674. Per person, round trip - $70./Per person, one way - $40. Horses at Tunnel Meadow are $20. per day, per person. Two weeks advance notice is best for horses and camping. Shorter notice is possible if you're just flying in.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Photography by Joshua L. Crabtree

Numu

First Settlers of the Owens Valley

by Gregory N. Leiber

The Owens Valley seemed an inhospitable place to the first white people who saw it. The winter snows and remote location invited unfavorable comparisons to the seemingly more prosperous lands west of the Sierra Nevada. They were heading to the goldfields and fertile valleys of California. The valley, with the formidable mountain chain to the west, was seen as just another barrier on the road to the promised land.

Ten thousand years before the earliest recorded description of the area by a white person, other people happened upon this country. They were the ancestors of the Numu, literally meaning "the people," and who are known today as the Paiute. They made the valley their home, establishing a society that remained remarkably stable and unchanged for 8,000 years.

The Owens Valley Paiute are the southernmost tribe of the Northern Paiute, a group which occupied most of northern Nevada. The Northern Paiute, like most other native groups in the Great Basin area (which includes portions of California, Nevada, Utah, Idaho and Wyoming) were nomadic. Their travels were dictated by the seasonal availability of food resources. The desert and semi-desert lands yielded little in the way of concentrated resources, and the original inhabitants traveled widely in order to survive the harsh climate.

The nuclear family was the most important component of these early Native American groups, usually operating independently of the larger tribe in order to reduce competition for food. The

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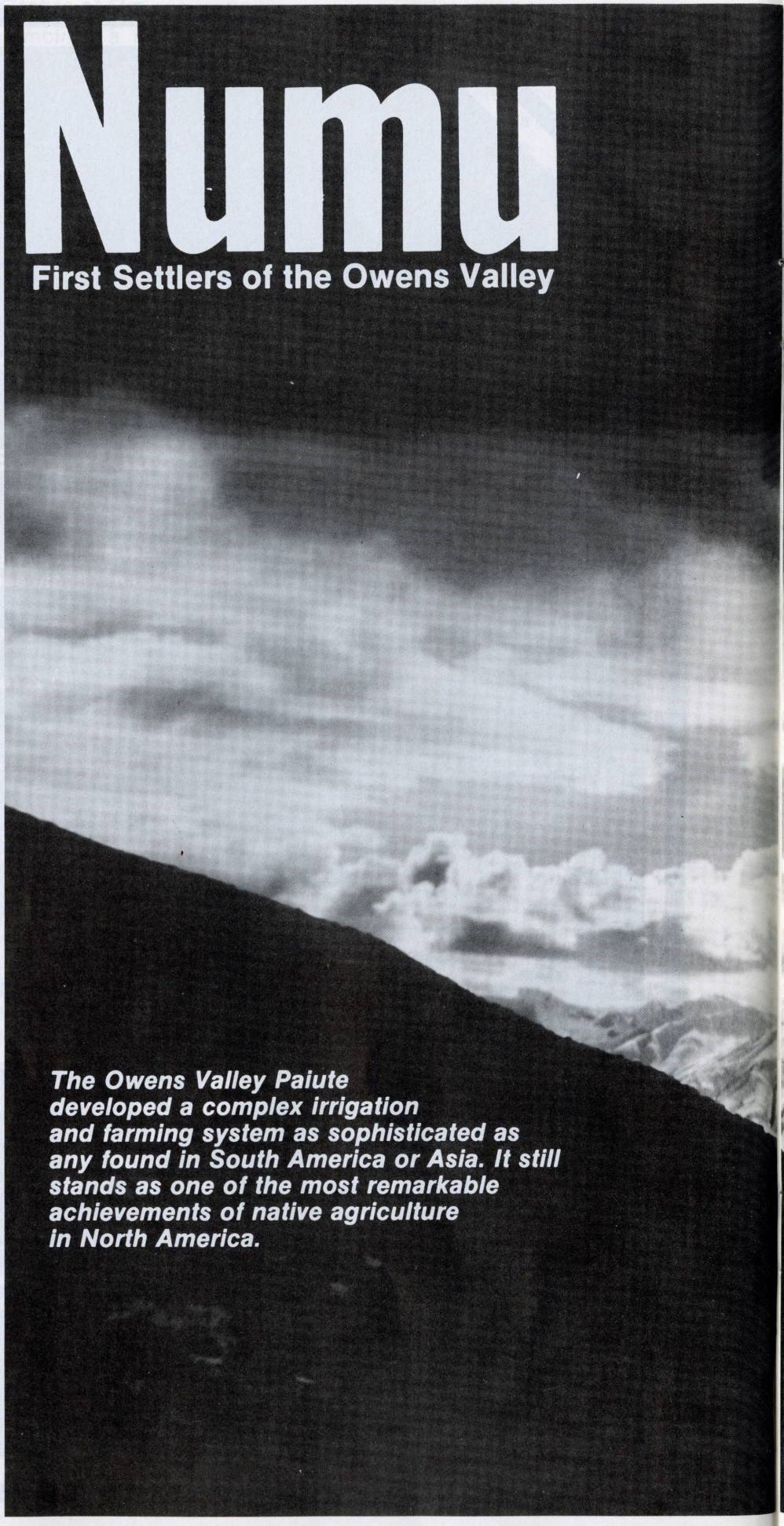
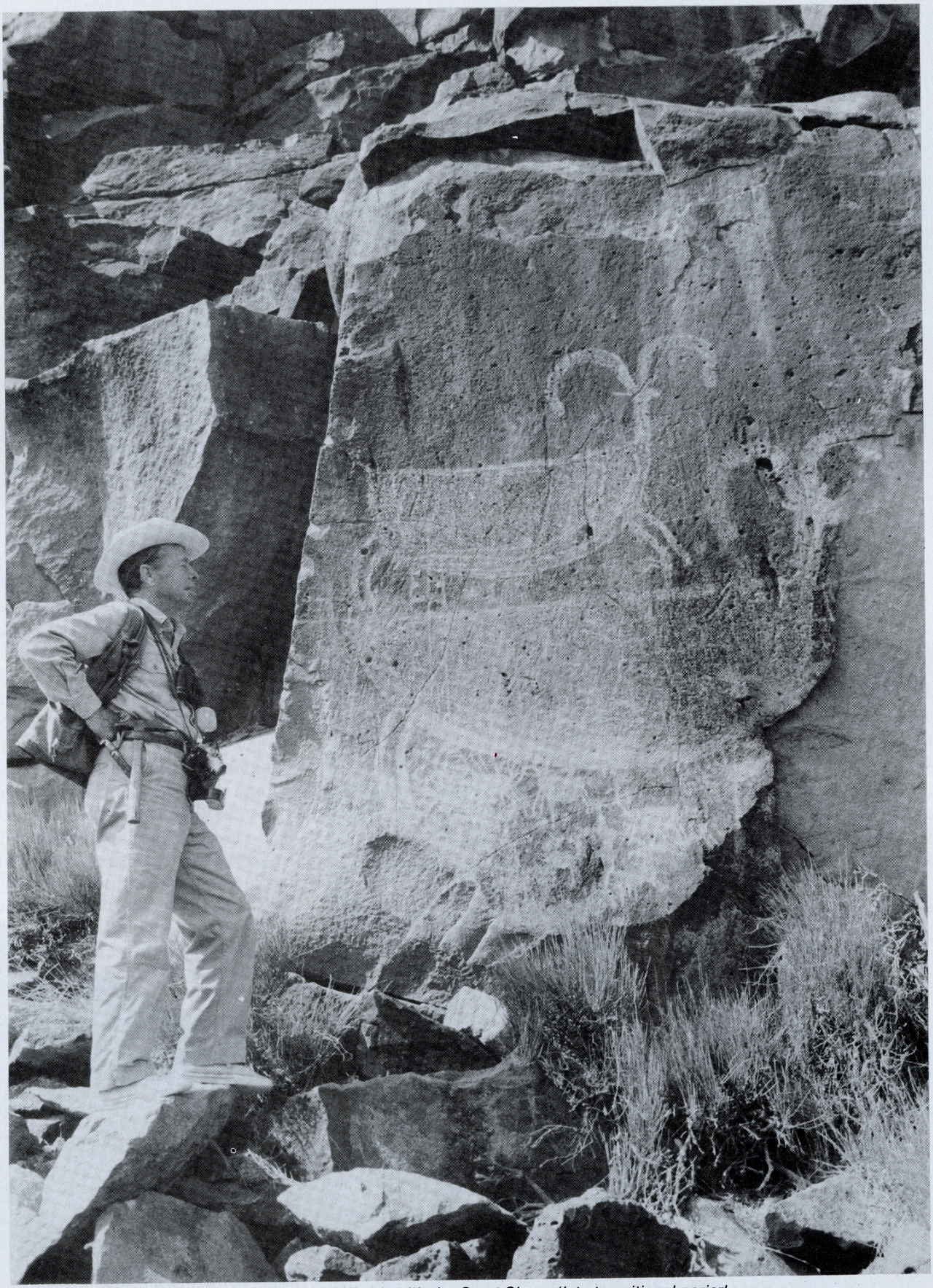


The Owens Valley Paiute developed a complex irrigation and farming system as sophisticated as any found in South America or Asia. It still stands as one of the most remarkable achievements of native agriculture in North America.

View of the majestic Sierra looking west from Westgard Pass, east of Big Pine, California.
Photography by Enid Larson, Copyright 1981.



Petroglyph expert, artist, and poet Campbell Grant with the Great Sheep (late transitional period superimposed over transitional and late styles). The larger sheep is about seven feet long. Photograph by J. Kenneth Pringle

ROCK ART TREASURES OF THE COSO RANGE

In an arid, barren section of California's Coso Range, nestled safely within the confines of the sprawling United States Naval Weapons Center at China Lake near Ridgecrest, lies what has been called the most extraordinary concentration of prehistoric rock pictures in the New World.

Designated a National Registered Landmark in May 1965, a perplexing assemblage of over eleven thousand Native American petroglyphs covers miles of basaltic rock walls in the large canyons. Here, among the northern ranges of an enormous modern weapons testing site, is graphic evidence of a long-vanished culture. Scratched and pecked into desert-varnish patinated boulders darkened by time are vigorous depictions of hunting figures, atlatls (spear throwing devices), stylized designs, at whose meanings we can only guess, and - most predominately - Bighorn sheep.

". . . no other comparable concentration of such prehistoric rock art in North America."

Even outside these major areas, known as Big Petroglyph and Little Petroglyph (or Renegade) Canyons, there are dozens of other sites scattered through the Naval Weapons Center's remote mountain reaches. The sheer number of these rock pictures is astonishing. There is no other comparable concentration of such prehistoric rock art in North America. The area culminates within the two canyons south of Coso Peak, where the average elevation is five thousand feet.

Big Petroglyph Canyon originates northwest of Louisiana Butte (6,876 feet) and cuts southwest to the China Lake Basin. About four miles east and parallel to Big Petroglyph is Renegade, or Little Petroglyph, Canyon. It arises to the east of Louisiana Butte, slices through Wild Horse Mesa, and also terminates at China Lake Basin.

Both canyons have received several names over the years. The former has been known as Black Canyon and simply as Petroglyph Canyon. Renegade Canyon appears on older maps as Sand Tanks.

Big Petroglyph Canyon was discovered by John Carricut, a sheep rancher, probably in the

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Rock Art of the Coso Range

early 1920's. At that time, some two decades before the establishment of the Naval Weapons Center, Carricut lived at Junction Ranch and ran his sheep in the Coso and Argus ranges. One winter, during a two-day blizzard, he took refuge with his flock in the canyon. Following the storm, he was astonished to see thousands of drawings of Bighorn sheep carved into the rugged cliffs above the survivors of his own forelorn flock.

In 1929, F.R. Johnson and Robert Carter prepared the first reported description of a section of Renegade Canyon for the University of California. But, the first published reference to Renegade Canyon appeared in the October 1933 issue of "Touring Topics," in an article by Philip Johnson.

When all these rock drawings were made remains a mystery. Estimates of their age range from a few centuries to thousands of years. The petroglyphs show a number of different styles, some apparently more ancient than others. In many cases, repatination of once freshly exposed heartrock bespeaks a great age; other petroglyphs, though surely tens of decades old, appear unaltered — as if they had been carved only last year, and their mysterious artists still dwelt somewhere in the wild Coso hills.

Yet, we do not know who these Native American rock artists were. They left little more than their art to record their passing, however long ago that may have been. They may have been a part of the Shoshonean-speaking population that once inhabited Southern California. Believed to have been forced out of the area by a drying climate, over population, and dwindling game herds nearly a millenium ago, they nevertheless produced an enormous volume of unique art that suggests their society was stable over a long period of time.

By the time the first non-native explorers entered the Indian Wells Valley region in the 1830's, the few Indians living at Coso knew nothing of the petroglyphs origins. The mysterious rock carvings, it was said, were made by the "Ancient Ones."

Nor does anyone know for certain why the Coso Petroglyphs were made. Surely, some compelling reason must have dictated so painstaking an effort over so many generations. One prevailing hypothesis is that there was magical significance, connected with the hunt, attached to these thousands of figures carved in hard rock. Since the most predominate drawings are of Bighorn sheep, creatures relatively rare and difficult to hunt, perhaps many of the designs were executed during preparations for Bighorn sheep hunts to insure success for the coming endeavor.

There are few designs depicting deer, and no petroglyphs of antelope have ever been discovered. If the designs were magical, then ceremonial magic presumably wasn't considered necessary to hunt such easy game. Perhaps, or perhaps not - we simply do not know.

The answer may be close at hand. A group of researchers based at the Maturango Museum of the Indian Wells Valley on the China Lake Naval Weapons Center and led by James W. Baird is tackling the facinating problem of the Coso Range rock art with modern sophisticated technology. Supported by a generous grant from the L.J. Skaggs Foundation of Oakland, California, Baird and his team are attempting to date representative petroglyphs by using a number of approaches. Several outside experts and specialists have joined the Museum

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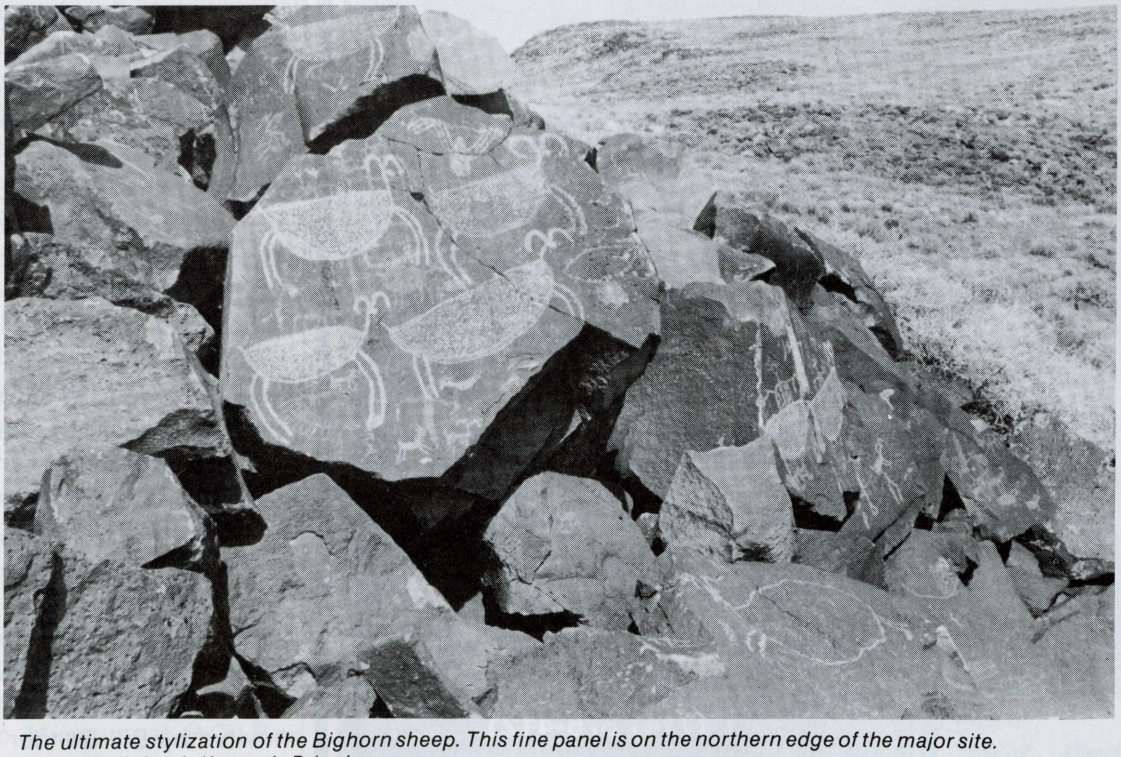
Large ceremonial fiqure holding single rod and three short rods (bow and arrows?). This combination is common in the Coso Range Petroglyph area.
Photograph by J. Kenneth Pringle



The ultimate stylization of the Bighorn sheep. This fine panel is on the northern edge of the major site.
Photograph by J. Kenneth Pringle

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Robert Wagoner *continued from page 6*

for invitational shows, including the popular Death Valley Forty-niners Encampment. In the Sierra, his paintings are shown in the High Country Western Art Gallery in Bishop.

Handsome, virile and straightforward, Bob Wagoner could be the prototype for his own western heroes. In the resonant voice of a professional singer, he talks about his work modestly, but without false humility. Bob is generous with his time and knowledge - perhaps a style set by memories of the kindness of another western artist. "When I was a kid, I would call Roy Rogers at the studio," he says, "and amazingly enough, they would put the call through. He would invite me to come down and I could spend the whole day on the set."

Wagoner is a multi-talented person, and he will tell you his feeling for painting was dormant for a long time. He served in the Marine Corps, became a flyer, and spent some time as a professional entertainer. He made an album, "High Country," and did the painting for the cover. He still sings with The Reinsmen for special occasions - most recently for a reunion of old western artists at CBS Television Center - and counts some well known names among his friends.

Life on the entertainment road was not a good family situation, so he went back to finish college, trying out forestry and business administration, then went into the construction business.

He was prospecting an unproductive mine when he started sketching desert scenery about 1960. "I had been painting about a year by the time I was first invited by Bill Bender to exhibit at the Death Valley Forty-niner Encampment," he says. Actually, he had been painting in oils only

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project. They plan to apply various techniques ranging from Arachaeo-astronomical interpretation to physical and chemical anaylsis.

Since they are located upon a vast military installation, these fine examples of prehistoric art are protected by strictly controlled access. Nevertheless, you may visit the Coso Range petroglyphs on certain weekends to see this marvellous prehistoric Native American heritage for yourself. The easiest and most informative way is to join one of the public tours offered by the Maturango Museum. These tours are given in the spring and fall, when weather conditions are pleasant. Experienced Museum volunteers conduct these tours and provide visitors with pertinent information about the petroglyphs, geology, and natural history of the area.

Awesome as Renegade Canyon's incredible collection of ancient petroglyphs is, there is also an irony about standing in the shadow of works of art that depict simple hunting weapons - bows, arrows, and spear throwing sticks (or atlatls) - while nearby and on regular test days performs the ultra-modern weaponry of the United States Navy.

Even if you are unable to make the trip, you can sample some of the flavor of the petroglyphs through the authoritative book, "Rock Drawings of the Coso Range," by Campbell Grant, James W. Baird, and Kenneth Pringle, published by the Maturango Museum in 1968 and still very much in print. It is available at the Museum and bookstores in the Ridgecrest area.

For full details on how to visit the Coso Range Petroglyphs, write the Maturango Museum at P.O. Box 1776, Ridecrest, California 93555, or call weekdays between 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. The telephone number is (714) 446-6900.

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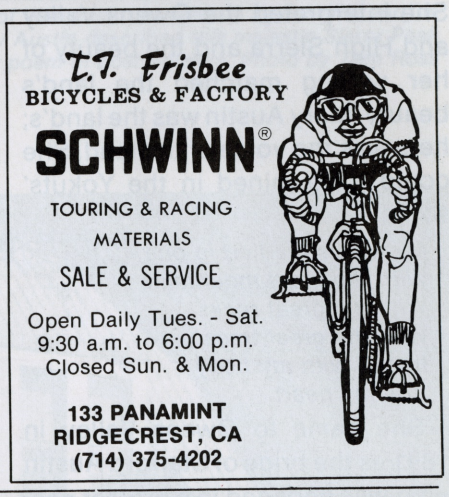

Sierra Profile . . .

Mary Austin

Her words were
one with the mountain.

by Candace Ross

Robert Frost has written "The land was ours before we were the lands." Mary Hunter Austin touched on many themes in her prose and poetry, but the outstanding imagery and expressive style of some of her finest works are based on her perceptions of the land of Inyo. She interpreted the Owens Valley and High Sierra and the beauty of her writing matched the land's beauty. Mary Austin was the land's; hers was the voice of the land. She could have joined in the Yokuts' song:

My words are tied in one
With the great mountains
With the great rocks
With the great trees,
In one with my body
And my heart

Mary Hunter Austin
Eastern California Museum photograph, copied by Tom Ross

She came to Owens Valley in 1891 as the bride of Stafford Austin who was engaged in a project near Lone Pine trying to divert water from the Owens River and irrigate a large parcel of land for future homes. She was twenty-three years old. She and her husband lived in Lone Pine, then in Bishop where she taught at the Methodist Academy from 1895 to 1897, then once again in Lone Pine, before settling in Independence from 1898 to 1905. Independence during these years is described in Helen MacKnight Doyle's book, *Mary Austin: Woman of Genius*, as

". . . the little town that lies on the slope of Kearsarge, that regal peak that juts eastward from the Sierra Nevada mountains. There were three streets in the town and three hundred people lived in unattractive houses on those streets which petered out into the desert by dusty windbreaks and that ever constant fringe of tin cans that edges a desert town."

"The main building was the County Court House whose activities with that of sheep, cattle and mining interest, supported the hotel, three stores and two saloons that straggled along the main street. A willow banked stream flowed down to the town and small farms, at scattered intervals, reclaimed the desert along its course."

Please turn to page 24

"The great gray bulk of Williamson heaved up against the sun" is the way Mary Austin described this majestic Sierra Peak in her poem in Lost Borders. Photo by Tom Ross

Mary Austin's home in Independence on Market Street, built in 1900. The fireplace was made half of rock and half of seashells by Mary Austin. The house is not open to the public but is marked with a California Historical Marker. Photo by Tom Ross

Mary Austin continued from page 22

This was the community where she would build her home in 1900. She herself fashioned the fireplace, and fifty years later when a California Registered Historical Marker was placed at the site, the words about her home from the Preface to *The Land of Little Rain* would serve as the plaque's engraving:

> *"But if ever you come across the borders as far as the town that lies in a little hill dimple at the foot of Kearsarge, never leave it until you have knocked at the door of the brown house under the willow tree at the end of the village street, and there you will have such news of the land, of its trails and what is astir in them, as one lover of it can give to another."*

During these years, she gained literary fame writing for several magazines including The Overland Monthly, Cosmopolitan, The Atlantic, and Out West. *The Land of Little Rain* was published in 1903. After she left Inyo, other books would be published that were based on her time there, including, *Lost Borders, The Flock,* and *The Ford.*

Mary Austin wrote . . ."Man is not himself only . . . He is all that he sees; all that flows to him from a thousand sources . . . He is the land; the lift of its mountain lines, and the reach of its valleys . . ." She reached this pinnacle of oneness with nature in her poem in *Lost Borders* which is alive with the imagery of Inyo:

Let's have done with stranger faces, let's be quit of staring eyes,
Let's go back across Mojave where where the hills of Inyo rise.
There's a word we've lost between us we shall never hear again
In the mindless clang of engines where they bray the hearts of men.
Let's go seek it east of Kearsarge where the seven-mile shadows run,
From the great gray bulk of Williamson heaved up against the sun.
Let's go look for Hassayampa, with your arm across my shoulders,
Through the cannons of lost rivers by the bone-white bleaching bowlders.
Through the scented glooming hollows where the gray wolf shadows flee —
Where from Sur to Ubhebe only you and I shall be;
And the word — I cannot name it, but we'll learn its sweetest use
In the moonlit sandy reaches when the desert wind is loose.
There's a little creek in Inyo, singing by beyond the town,
Through the pink wild-almond tangle and the birches slim and brown,
Where all night we'll watch the star beams in the shallow, open rills,
And the hot, bright moons of August skulking low along the hills;
And the word will wake in Inyo — never printed in a page —
With the wind that wakes the morning on a thousand miles of sage.

She wrote about her theory of the "landscape line;" words that are matched to the environment. One feels the majesty of the mountains in the cadence of her lines from *The Land of Little Rain* which can be written in lines like free verse:

"All streets of the mountains lead to the citadel;
Steep or slow they go up to the core of the hills . . .
You will find it forsaken of most things
But beauty, and madness and death and God . . .
You get the saw-tooth effect from a distance,
But the nearby granite bulk glitters with
The terrible keen polish of old glacial ages.
I say terrible; so it seems.
When those glossy domes swim into the alpenglow
Wet after rain,
You conceive how long and imperturbable
Are the purposes of God."
. . . how distinct is the Sierra Nevada.
A very Bonaparte of mountains,
New-born and lording it over the ancient ranges . . ."

Her words convey the immensity and wildness of the High Sierra, and this is what she has been acclaimed for, her interpretation of the land in outline and meaning, the ways of nature and its forces. Speaking of her own writing, she said, "There is really nothing to tell. I have just looked nothing more . . . by and by I got to know when and where looking was most worthwhile. Then I got so full of looking that I had to write to get rid of some of it and make room for more." Her theory of the American Rhythm in poetry, well-illustrated by her own passage on the Streets of the Mountains, owes its cadences to the geographical location where it was envisioned. The Land of Little Rain fired her imagination and inspired her, and the land is immortalized in her works. She spoke of Owens Valley in this passage from *The Flock*:

> *"That desert fenced portion between Mojave and Sherwin Hill, where lies a big, wild country, full of laughing water with pines marching up alongside them, circling the grassy colored lakes, full of noble windy slopes and high grassy valleys barred by the straight shadows of new mountains. All the cliffs of that country have fresh edges, all the light that cuts between them from the westering sun lies yellowy along the sod. All the winds of its open spaces smell of sage, and all its young rivers are swift. They begin thin and crystalline from under the forty-foot drifts, grow thick and brown in the hot leaps of early summer, run clear with full throaty laughter in mid-season, froth and cloud to quick, far-off rains, fall off to low and golden and mottled rills before the first of the snows"*

Like Thoreau and Muir before her, her books and poetry such as *The Land of Little Rain, Lost Borders, The Flock* and *Land of Journeys Ending* portray the oneness of man with nature and the reader feels the wonders of nature as if he himself had gone to

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Mary Austin *continued from page 24*

these places. Mary Austin wrote thirty-five books and hundreds of short stories.

Even after she left Independence in 1905, disillusioned about the future of the Owens River Valley because of the Los Angeles aqueduct project, knowing the valley would be irrevocably changed, she still thought of Inyo, and the country of the "dwelling place of a Great Spirit" figured in her mystic view of her own death:

> *"I was so convinced of going on after it, that I thought to pass through the experience called dying might prove interesting, and even advantageous. As near as I could guess from predilection, I should go on as the guardian spirit of a little forest of silver firs in an easterly lap of the Sierras where in January the drifts are forty feet deep and in June the air is odorous and hot with the breath of saxifrage and penstemon. There I should shake out the sapling firs from the slogging snows, keep the deer from trampling the white lupins along the creek, and manifest as a blue shaft of light in the green and windy gloom."*

Mary Austin died in Santa Fe on August 13, 1934 at the age of sixty-six years. She left her mark on the country of Inyo and though she left it, many of her later works were drawn upon it. She captured the feeling of nature she spoke of, "beauty that takes the breath like pain." The graphic descriptions of Inyo in her works bring the country alive to her readers.

As time brings more and more mechanized and materialistic processes to society, it is and will continue to be refreshing to read the works of a person for whom the landscape was part of her innermost being, who felt nature close to her heart and who had the gift to interpret the land in her writings. Those who know Inyo intimately can only feel with her that " there is no sort of experience that works so constantly and subtly upon man as his regional environment."

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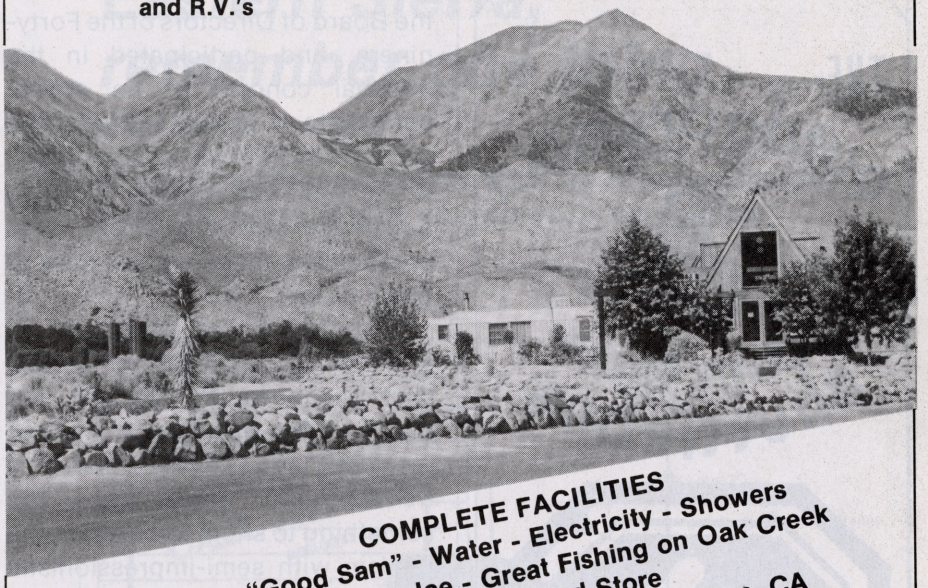

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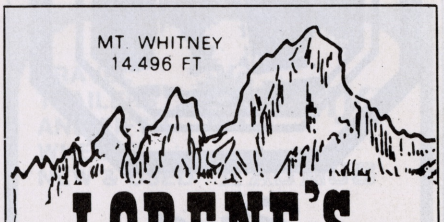

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Robert Wagoner continued from page 20

seven months, when he attracted immediate attention and began to sell his canvases at this first exhibit in 1961. Eventually, he served on the Board of Directors of the Forty-niners, and participated in the unusual concept of an artists' composite, an annual feature of the show. "I had the job of completing it one year, and it winds up being the work of the artist who completes it, because you have to clean it up."

Asked if he was influenced by any other artists, Wagoner credits Olaf Wieghorst, Bill Bender, and Burt Procter. He was first inspired by their work, then friendships developed. "They gave me something to shoot for, to combine realism with semi-impressionistic technique."

"All too often, I think, artists want to reproduce nature as it is. A camera can do that," Bob Wagoner says. "I don't like the use of a camera other than to picture something like an old stage coach, or a detail somewhere, to use as a reference. To copy - that's not what creative art is. If you do that, you become a proficient technician, and lose sight of what art is all about. Facing a blank canvas and then, through your own ability as a draftsman and designer creating your own images on a background, is probably a more difficult approach, but it is much more satisfying."

A glance through Preview '80, one of the advance catalogs of the private showings in the Texas Stadium Club, strongly points up Bob's special talent as a colorist. His works are splendrous with depth and richness of color.

"Inspiration comes from many places," he reflects, "fishing on South Lake in a boat, watching the waterfalls coming off the high peaks, listening to it. I store these impressions away like a squirrel and draw on them at a later time." He feels his music and his paintings have a strong relationship.

"When I'm in the mood, I paint. If not, I go fishing, or pitch horseshoes, or ride. One should - if you're not mentally in tune, you can do more damage than good." That's not a philosophy for the first years of development, he will explain, when self-discipline is important because of gallery commitments or to become a professional. "Artists get hopped up on painting and then find out just how tough it is and they quit. When you face that canvas you are on your own."

Wagoner works on a whole painting at once, putting in color and mass to see the whole and capture a mood. "I have an idea - that's all - pretty fuzzy at first. I start from black and white and draw in sketchily so I'm not restricted. I keep it fluid and loose, change this and that, and build design into the idea. The lines of action and animation feed the idea. It is important to capture the mood. All the other things are an intregral part, but you feed them in as you develop the idea and mood."

"I don't ask for opinion, but have paintings available and people can express their own feelings. I'm always anxious to hear them - particularly those of other artists. There are people who don't paint, though, who are excellent critics. My son, Dennis, is probably the only one I really believe in. When he says there is something wrong, I'll dig into to it and nine times out of ten he is right. I have felt frustrated at times. Maybe it's a matter of not being able to see the forest for the trees."

Robert Wagoner is listed in Artists of the Rockies, Who's Who in American Art, American Artists of Renown, and has been featured in Southwest Art and other Western magazines too numerous to list, even as far away as Italy.

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Robert Wagoner *continued from page 26*

"The Cowboy in Art," by Ed Ainsworth, recognized him in 1968.

"Do you paint what you want, always, or is there a temptation now to paint for the public?" I had to ask.

"If you have an art show, and a certain work received the most attention, you keep that in mind when you go into that show next year," the honest answer comes, "but I do what I want to do, so some of my stuff hasn't sold. Galleries will order scenes but take what you send. They will tell you they are having an exhibit and need six to ten paintings from you by a certain date - no restrictions, which is great. I've been fortunate in that I've been able to do what I wanted and still keep the wolf away from my door. I gave everything away at first. The first one I sold was to a friend, for twenty-five dollars. When I moved to Bishop in about 1971, I had quit my job and needed income. It was a matter then of transition from construction to full time artist. I had contacts in Scottsdale and a few commissions but it was slim pickings for awhile The first years, I worked all day and almost all night. I've slacked off now. I've missed a few things - fishing, things I came here to do."

"What do you think is your best work so far?"

"I have few favorites. One I thought was the best didn't even sell," he ponders, looking into space as if still seeing that painting. "It makes you wonder. You feel you've done something pretty fair for what you are capable of doing, and no one else saw it that way."

"You never stop learning. When you feel like you have reached a high in your development and it is good enough that you don't want to go any further, your work starts to suffer and stagnate. Growth is a natural thing in the fine arts. It is the excitement of knowing you have created something that is uniquely yours."

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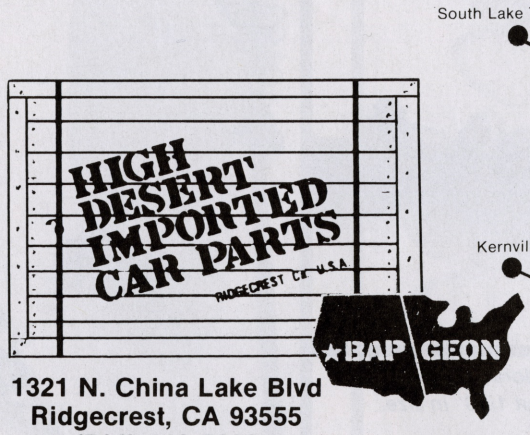

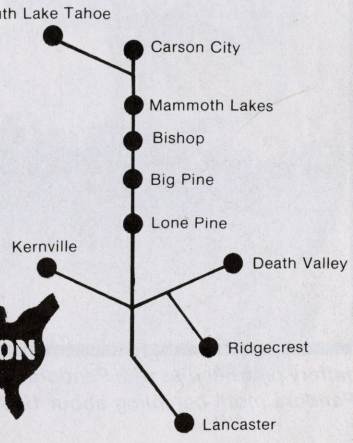

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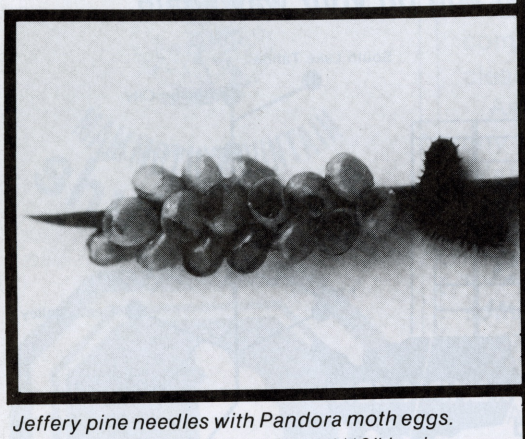
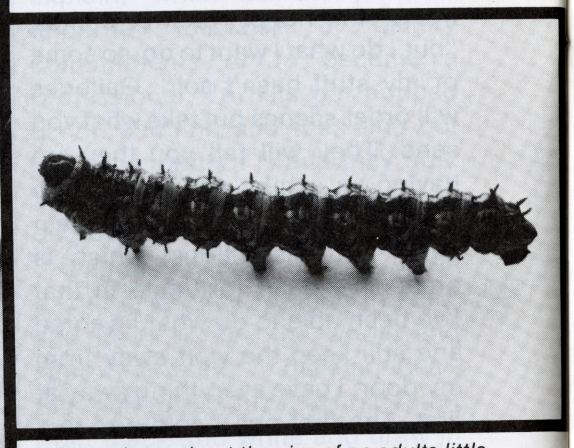


Jeffery pine needles with Pandora moth eggs. Pandora moth hatchling about 1/10" in size.

The caterpillar will go through five stages — shedding its skin and growing larger each time.



Mature larva about the size of an adults little finger.

by Joel Flagler

The Pandora moth — it can bring disaster to our Jeffery pine forests . . . it can also bring benefit as a life sustaining food.

Insects have played a major role in ecological systems since Creation. They can bring disaster in the forms of disease and agricultural ruin. And, they can bring benefit by serving as a life-sustaining food. The Pandora moth (coloradia pandora lindseyi) is well named. For like Pandora's Box of Greek Mythology, the insect brings both good and bad luck for man.

The major positive and negative characteristics of the Pandora moth appear when the moth is in its larval or caterpillar stage. The larvae has served as a major food staple of the Paiute Indians for a thousand years or more. At the same time, however, the larvae feeds exclusively on Jeffrey pine trees causing serious forest defoliation.

The Pandora moth has recently hit the eastern Sierra region and we are now provided with a rare opportunity to study this fascinating insect.

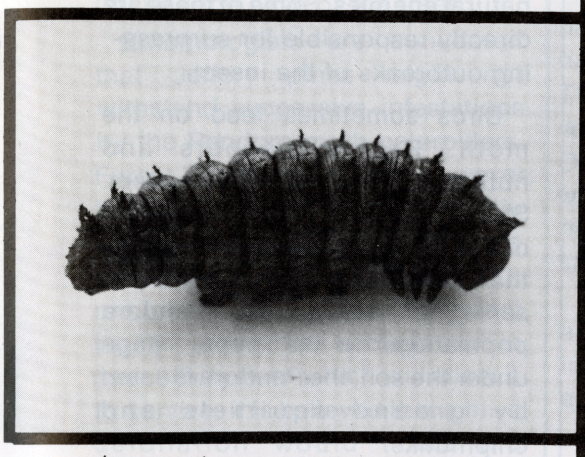
The Pandora moth is one of the largest forest insects in North America. The adult moth is one to one and a half inches long with a wingspread up to four and a half inches. Each forewing and hindwing is greyish-brown with a black spot and a wavy dark line. The heavy-bodied moth is but one stage of development in the Pandora's metamorphosis.

The life cycle begins with tiny globular eggs deposited in clusters on needles and bark of the Jeffrey pines. After hatching, the caterpillar undergoes five stages, shedding its skin and growing larger each time. The mature larval caterpillar is olive brown, marked by yellow bands and white stripes. They grow to the size of an adult's little finger, although five inch specimens are not uncommon.

The next metamorphic stage is called pupa. It is a stout, dark brown form the size of a thimble, with a tough outer shell. Finally, the moths emerge from these pupal shells and start a new generation.

The details of the Pandora's life cycle are interesting, and help us to

Photography by Patty Van Dolson from the collections of Enid Larson and Jack Edell



Larva ready to pupate after shedding its skin.

Pupa about the size of a thimble with a tough outer shell.

Male and female Pandora moths. The female is easily identifiable by the feathered antennae.

understand this unusual insect. Basically, the Pandora moth exhibits a two-year life cycle. During even-numbered years the insect appears in its moth form. And during odd-numbered years we see the larval caterpillar form.

During 1980, for example, the adult moth appeared around late June, mid-July. The females laid their eggs in July and August and the new generation was born in the trees during August and September. After fulfilling their egg-laying mission, the adult moth will die. Many were seen littering the streets of Mammoth Lakes during this time.

The newborn caterpillars overwinter in groups high in the Jeffery pines. Apparently, freezing temperatures don't bother them. The young caterpillars eat lightly during the winter months, feeding on the needles of the Jeffery pine.

In the spring, with the onset of warmer weather, the caterpillars begin to feed steadily. These larvae grow rapidly and consume enormous quantities of Jeffrey pine needles. In early July, the caterpillars crawl down from the pines and dig into the soil where they transform into the cocoon-like forms called pupae. Here they will remain through the coming winter. Next spring they will again emerge as moths, completing one full generation, and ready to start the two-year cycle again.

However, there are other forces at work which determine the nature of a Pandora moth outbreak. The life cycle of the Pandora does not continue for more than six to eight years at a time. Rather, the population grows and then crashes, as if the insect had simply disappeared.

The outbreak presently being experienced in the eastern Sierra, was first noticed during the summer of 1978. At this time the adult Pandora moths were plentiful in the Crestview area just north of Mammoth Lakes along Highway 395. In 1979, an odd-numbered year, the caterpillar defoliated several thousand acres of Jeffrey pines in the Inyo National Forest. Then, in the summer of 1980, the moths were again very abundant and spread southward into the Mammoth Lakes area.

It is not known why Pandora outbreaks hit certain areas when they do. Historical records indicate

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Pandora's Box *continued from page 29*

that the population increases to epidemic proportions every twenty to thirty years. The insect remains for six to eight years and then Nature runs its course and the population crashes again. The current Pandora moth outbreak is in its fifth year.

The Pandora moth has several natural enemies. Some of these are directly responsible for surpressing outbreaks of the insect.

Birds sometimes feed on the moth. Brown creepers and nuthatches feed on egg clusters. Stellar's Jays and Vireos eat the caterpillar. There are also parasites that attack the larval stages and serve to reduce the Pandora population. In its pupal stage under the soil, the Pandora is eaten by ground squirrels and chipmunks.

The most important natural control of the Pandora population, however, is an invisible enemy. It is a wilt disease caused by a virus. The virus infects the mature caterpillars, causing them to shrivel and become limp. In the past this disease has wiped out entire Pandora populations, and it may do so again.

Earlier this year there were indications that the moth was being infected by this natural virus enemy. Insect specialist examined samples of the caterpillar and established study sites in and around the Mammoth Lakes area. Samples of the caterpillars taken in May and June of this year proved that the Pandora population was collapsing in nearly all the eleven study areas. Only one of the study areas remains free of the disease at this time.

Like its namesake in Greek Mythology, the Pandora has both good and bad qualities. The most devastating of the bad qualities stems from the caterpillar's eating habits. Feeding exclusively on pine needles, the Pandora is

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Pandora's Box *continued from page 30*

responsible for defoliating massive portions of our Jeffery pine forests.

Defoliated pines appear thin and wispy with the remaining foliage chiefly at branch tips. When feeding populations of Pandora caterpillars are present, you can see damaged needle tips and greenish droppings called frass littering the base of the trees.

Entomologists are concerned that Jeffery pines might not withstand successive infestations by the Pandora moth caterpillars. Forest Service specialists,however, believe that the trees can generally tolerate defoliation twice and suffer only minor growth reduction. This is due to the fact that the tree stores enough food in its root's system which will allow it to survive. It is believed that a third defoliation would make the mortality rate of the Jeffery pines rise substantially. However, history shows that natural factors like the virus usually control the Pandora population prior to any major tree mortality.

Foresters also believe that the process of defoliation is not entirely bad. Defoliation does have an immediate negative effect by removing the needles that produce food for the tree through photosynthesis. However, by eating the needles and reducing them to fertilizer and mulch, the caterpillars act as nutrition factories for the pine trees. The increased levels of nitrogen and phosphorous bring about added growth which compensates for the earlier lack of growth.

Defoliation also removes the needles of the taller trees, allowing more sunlight to reach the smaller pines. A natural selection of healthy trees may also result. Trees that are old and weak may be weeded out by the caterpillar, allowing room for the healthy trees to grow larger.

Finally, the unsightliness caused by the defoliation is short term. By August the new growth refoliates the Jeffery pines and they again appear healthy.

The Paiute Indians are native to the Great Basin area which includes the adjacent portions of Southern California, Utah, and Nevada. At the start of their culture the Paiute economy was based on food gathering.

Since the semi-desert is such a harsh environment, the Paiutes had to work very hard to survive. They made use of all small game, vegetables, roots, insects and nuts. One of the staples of the Paiute diet was Piuga (Pee-au-gee), the Paiute name for the Pandora moth caterpillar.

The techniques for gathering and preparing Piuga are quite interesting, and these techniques are still used today.

In the old days, Paiute families walked or rode on horses and wagons from the Owens Valley to areas north of Mammoth Lakes where the Jeffery pine occurs in large stands. The harvest process begins by examining the base of the trees, looking for large amounts of droppings which indicates the presence of the caterpillars. Circular trenches are then dug around the trees. As the caterpillars crawl down the trees in early July they are trapped, unable to climb out of the steep trench walls. The insects are then collected in special round-bottomed baskets. The next step is to build a large mound of earth and set a fire on top of it. Once the earth is well-heated the fire is removed, the mound is opened, and the caterpillars are thrown in. When they have cooked about an hour, the Piuga are sifted out. The drying process is completed by spreading them on the ground, and them storing them in sacks in a cool, dry place. Present-day Paiutes store them in freezers where they reportedly keep well for a year or more. The Piuga can be eaten plain

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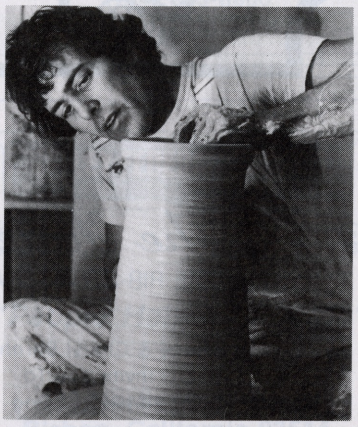

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Pandora's Box *continued from page 31*

or mixed into soups and stews. The flavor might be compared to a boiled egg. Like eggs, the Piuga is high in protein and other nutrients. As the elder Paiutes are quick to explain, the Piuga caterpillar is a clean creature since it grows fat on an exclusive diet of pine needles. A statement by one of the elder Paiute Indians sums up their feeling for the Pandora caterpillar and Nature's balance in general.

"Piuga is part of our traditional religious culture."

"Piuga is part of our traditional religious culture. The Creator and Mother Earth made Piuga as food for the Indian people. It is a religious gift of life. When Indian people gather Piuga they pray to Mother Earth to make the Jeffery pine needles plentiful for Piuga to eat. We pray to her to nourish the Jeffery pine so that the needles will grow back again."

Early in the fall of 1980, the Forest Service along with community members, and members of the Paiute Indian tribe formed a study group to evaluate the Pandora moth outbreak. It was decided not to take any counter-attack measures to bring the Pandora moth outbreak under control. This decision is acceptable to both the Forest Service and the Indian community.

If future generations of the Pandora caterpillars pose a serious threat to our Jeffery pine forests, the study group will be reactivated. In the meantime, we can draw upon our newly gained knowledge of the Pandora phenomeon — knowledge we have gained by opening Pandora's Box.

Numu *continued from page 14*

individual families came together only rarely, cooperating in mutual gathering and hunting activities when the supply would allow them to do so.

The Owens Valley region offered a unique environment, where a relative abundance of resources were concentrated in one area. The valley lies in the rain shadow of the Sierra Nevada, receiving only five to six inches of rain each year. Yet the run-off from the snow-pack of these mountains provides a year-round supply of water for the valley. The tributaries of the Owens River support a variety of fish and aquatic life, as well as a large number of native plants.

"As other groups of the Great Basin continued a wandering lifestyle, the Paiute settled in the Owens Valley."

As other groups of the Great Basin continued a wandering lifestyle, the Paiute settled in the Owens Valley. They gradually began to alter their way of life to take advantage of the valley's environment. Seasonal food supplies were gathered and the Paiute began to cultivate certain edible plants.

The nuclear family became less independent in regards to the needs of the community, and eventually political entities called districts were formed. The districts were comprised of a single large autonomous village or a cluster of several smaller allied villages. There were at least thirty villages clustered into a smaller number of districts. They ranged from Round Valley, located a few miles north of Bishop, to the Owens Lake in the south. The total population of these villages has been estimated by archaeologists as being about two thousand people. The Owens Valley was one of the most densely settled regions of the Great Basin.

As their way of life changed from that of their nomadic origins to a communal lifestyle, the influence of the districts increased. Whereas in other areas of the Great Basin, hunting and gathering areas were open to all who could use the resources, the Paiute developed a concept of land ownership. Each district had a distinct territory which included seed plots, pinon groves, irrigated land, and hunting and fishing areas. The land was further subdivided into family plots which were passed on by inheritance.

These lands were defended against outsiders, which sometimes included other Paiute districts. Disagreements over district-owned lands were usually brief and did not involve the use of deadly force. The Paiute were generally on good terms with each other and neighboring tribes.

The concept of district headman was also unique to the Owens Valley Paiute. In other areas of the Great Basin, tribal leaders were chosen by group consensus, and they were in charge of specific functions such as group hunts. When the task was completed, the leader would resume his normal role within the tribe.

The position of Chief in the Owens Valley villages was of a more permanent nature, inherited from the preceeding headman. The group could choose a successor if they disapproved of the headman's selection. The headman directed the major communal activities, including appointing the special irrigator, fall festivals, rabbit and antelope hunts, group harvests and inter-tribal ventures.

It has been theorized that the headmen were also the focus of an extensive inter-tribal trading system. In the Mono Lake area there are large flows of high quality obsidian, which was used for arrowheads and other tools. The Mono Lake Paiute, a group that followed the nomadic lifestyle, traded the valuable obsidian with tribes located in the western foothills and valleys of the Sierra. In return, they received shell beads and pendants, a form of Indian currency. They had little intrinsic

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Numu *continued*

value, but they could be exchanged for food.

The Mono Lake Paiute would then trade the shell-beads for food from the Owens Valley tribe. Since food sources were limited in the Mono Lake region, the cooperation between tribes served to minimize conflict over scarce resources.

Within the Owens Valley, the use of shell beads was part of an inter-village banking system. When one village had a surplus of food, it could bank the surplus by trading the food for shell-beads. If the village later experienced a bad year, it could then withdraw some of its banked surplus by trading shell-beads for food.

The trading was carried out at village fiestas called fandangos. The fandangos were under the direction of the village headmen.

The single most important activity in the day-to-day existence of the Paiute was the gathering of food. Even though the Owens Valley area provided nearly everything the Indians needed to sustain life, it was still necessary for them to travel away from the valley settlements. They sometimes traveled up to twenty miles on foot to reach pinenut groves and hunting areas.

The Paiute utilized over one hundred different varieties of plants, including wild seed-bearing plants, berries and the roots of certain species. They supplemented this diet by hunting, either individually or by group hunts. Rabbit, antelope and deer were their main quarry. Fishing was also important, especially in the southern Owens Valley, where fish were a major part of the native diet.

Pinenuts were the most important food source for the Paiute. The nuts were collected on the slopes of the Inyo and White Mountains at elevations between 6,000 and 9,000 feet. When the crop matured in late September or early October, the district headman would organize and lead the harvesters to the communally-owned groves.

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The pine cones would be knocked from the trees by the men using long-handled poles with a hook lashed to the end. Women would gather the fallen cones, as well as the loose, ripe nuts which fell on blankets spread beneath the trees.

The cones were sun-dried or roasted until they opened. They would then be threshed in an open pit, and the nuts winnowed from the dirt and debris in a winnowing basket.

The nuts could then be used in a variety of ways; eaten whole, as flour ground on a metate, or as part of a soup or mush which was cooked in a clay pot. Surplus cones and nuts were stored for use during the following year. Whole cones were stored on sunny hillsides in bins lined with rocks, covered with pine needles, boughs, and more rocks. Loose nuts were kept in pits lines and covered with grass.

The arrival of spring brought increased activity among the Indians of the Owens Valley. It was at this time that the head irrigator would be chosen, and work would begin on the irrigated plots maintained by the districts.

"The two largest sections of irrigated land bordered Bishop Creek on either side."

The Paiute had conceived and constructed an intricate system of dams, canals and smaller ditches. The canals channeled water from tributaries of the Owens River to plots on the western side of the valley.

The two largest sections of irrigated land bordered Bishop Creek on either side. The northern plot was a staggering 4 miles by 1½ miles, while the southern tract measured approximately two square miles.

Each spring, the head irrigator and twenty-five men would construct a dam of boulders, brush, sticks and mud on Bishop Creek. The dam was located about a mile from the foot of the Sierra. The water would then be channeled into canals parallel to the stream, the northern canal being over two miles long and the southern more than three miles.

The main canals were the size of modern-day irrigation projects, dug without the benefit of draft animals or even metal tools, both of which were unknown to the Paiute. They used simple digging sticks made of mountain mahogany or buckbrush. Some researchers have conservatively estimated that the irrigation system took twenty years, and probably longer. It stands as one of the remarkable achievements of native agriculture in North America.

The Paiute also practiced a form of crop management, alternating the irrigation of the plots so as to leave them fallow every other year. This reduced the possibility of unwanted plants crowding out the principle crops. It also allowed the soil a chance to rest between harvests, which in turn would increase the probability of a larger yield the following season.

Unlike other Indian groups who cultivated traditional domesticated crops such as corn, melons and squash, the people of the Owens Valley nurtured native plant species. The two most important plants have been identified as being wild-hyacinth and yellow nut-grass. Both plants yield edible roots which resemble an onion in appearance.

The fact that the Paiute had no knowledge of domesticated crops undermines the theory that cultivation was introduced from outside the valley. Other groups engaging in agriculture in the southwest and on the California coast, utilized the traditional plants exclusively. If the concept of cultivation had come from an outside tribe, these plants would have probably accompanied the information. Archaeological evidence points to an early development of agriculture, long before the first contact with the white culture. It is very possible that the Owens Valley Paiute developed independently a complex farming system that was as sophisticated as any found

continued on page 36

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Numu *Continued from page 35*

among societies in South America and Asia.

It's hard to imagine what life was like for the Paiute, whose lives were intimately connected with the earth and its seasons. Yet if one considers that a typical Indian family provided their own food, shelter, education, medical care and entertainment, it becomes clear that their lives were indeed complex. Survival itself depended on knowledge, skill and sensitivity.

The coming of the white settlers heralded the end of the early Paiute way of life. In 1859, Captain J.W. Davidson led an expedition through the Owens Valley, looking for stock believed to have been stolen from ranches in the San Joaquin Valley.

"What he did find was a thriving native culture that greatly impressed him."

Captain Davidson did not find any traces of stolen cattle or horses. What he did find was a thriving native culture that greatly impressed him. He would later remark about the industriousness of the Paiute, and he saw in them an integrity he had not foreseen.

While his expedition was not the first to traverse the Owens Valley, Captain Davidson's report was the first truly favorable account of the region. He described in detail the bountiful resources of the valley, and dutifully filed his report with his superiors.

Within two years of the Davidson expedition, settlers and stockmen were arriving in the Owens Valley. They were lured by the description provided in the Captain's report, and the accounts of civilians who had accompanied the expedition.

When Captain Davidson had spoken to the Paiute leaders, he told them that the government would probably set aside the valley, or a large portion of it, as a reservation. Unfortunately for the native people, his prophecy did not come true.

By the fall of 1861 tension between the settlers and the Indians errupted into bloodshed. While it has been generally believed that the California Indian tribes did not engage in warfare with the whites, that was not the case in the Owens Valley. The Paiute were a proud people, who rightly saw the grazing of stock on their lands as an unwarranted intrusion. And they were prepared to defend their rights to the land they had lived on for thousands of years.

The battles that occured between the fall of 1861 and the summer of 1863 followed the pattern seen in other parts of the United States during the westward expansion era. The Paiute were gradually driven from their land, with at least 200 Indians and 60 settlers dying during this time.

By the winter of 1863, it was becoming apparent to some Paiute leaders that the settlers would eventually prevail. But it was not until the settlers and soldiers began destroying Indian food caches that the Paiute were forced to surrender.

On July 11, 1863, 908 Paiute men, women and children began the long march from Camp Independence to the San Sebastian Indian Reservation at Fort Tejon in the southern San Joaquin Valley. Many Indians escaped during the march, and most of the others would return to the valley in the following years. But the Paiute dominion over the land had essentially ended. Those who returned found their fields being used to graze stock, and the irrigation ditches watering settlers crops.

In his original report, Captain Davidson wrote a fitting epitaph for the Owens Valley and the Paiute culture as it once was, even though he could not have known it at the time.

"Wherever the water touches this soil of disintegrated granite, it acts like the wand of the Enchanter, and it may with truth be said that these Indians have made some portions of their country, which otherwise were desert, to bloom and blossom as the rose."

High Altitude Dining . . .

The Sierra Life staff recently had the pleasure of attending a dinner meeting of the High Desert Eastern Sierra Chambers of Commerce. The event was held at the Hideaway in Ridgecrest, and was hosted by Bruce and Cheryl Bernhardi, owners of the Hideaway. The Bernhardi's put together one of the most fantastic buffets in the High Sierra! Entrees included prime rib, shrimp, chicken and pork chops, along with a great selection of salads, vegetables and deserts.

The great food, excellent service and friendly people all combined to make dinner a memorable occassion!

Thanks Bruce and Cheryl for a great evening!

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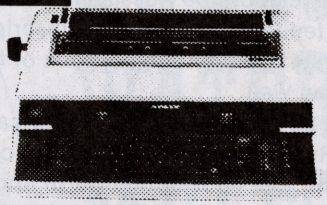

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Letters . . .

Editor:

Two years ago my wife, Margaret, and I started to record the unrecorded petroglyphs in Inyo and Esmeralda counties. Many had already been recorded, especially those on the bench north of Bishop and the COSO petroglyphs. But there are a scattering of smaller sites that do not appear in the literature.

At one site in southern Esmeralda County we found something unusual, a petroglyph out of the ordinary. Cut in the soft tuffaceous rock of this small canyon was an inscription in so far an unknown language. The wall was lined with Native American petroglyphs — all too badly eroded to be copied, but this one was clearly legible. In some respects it resembled the alphabet that Russian is written in, the Cyrillic. The final glyph in the second word looks like a modified form of the key to pronunciation the Russians used called the hard sign. Now ten feet away from the inscription and facing it is the date 1806 cut into a block of tuff broken from the canyon wall.

Oh boy, we thought,an historical discovery. In 1805 the Russians at Fort Ross, California, were scouting around to establish their farm and trading post. They must have scouted clear over into Nevada. So we got hold of a Russian dictionary to translate our find.

Next we got hold of all the European and Middle Eastern alphabets, both modern and ancient figuring maybe some erudite joker was having fun at the viewers expense. What a mess. Half of them I never heard of before. Ethiopic, Brahmi, Sabean, Nashki, Tema, Sindjirli, Glagolitic, Libyanic, Safahitic, to name a few. **No luck there either.**

On a trip to Churchill at Hudson Bay we started trying Native American syllabaries, Cree, Chippewyan, Central Eskimo. nothing. Then Cherokee. Still nothing.

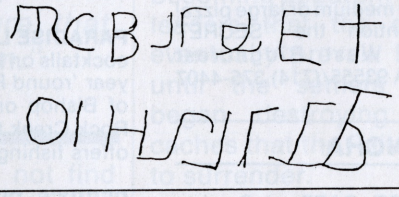
My Alaskan cousin sent me samples of the writing invented by Herman Neck, a Yupik Eskimo. More nothing.

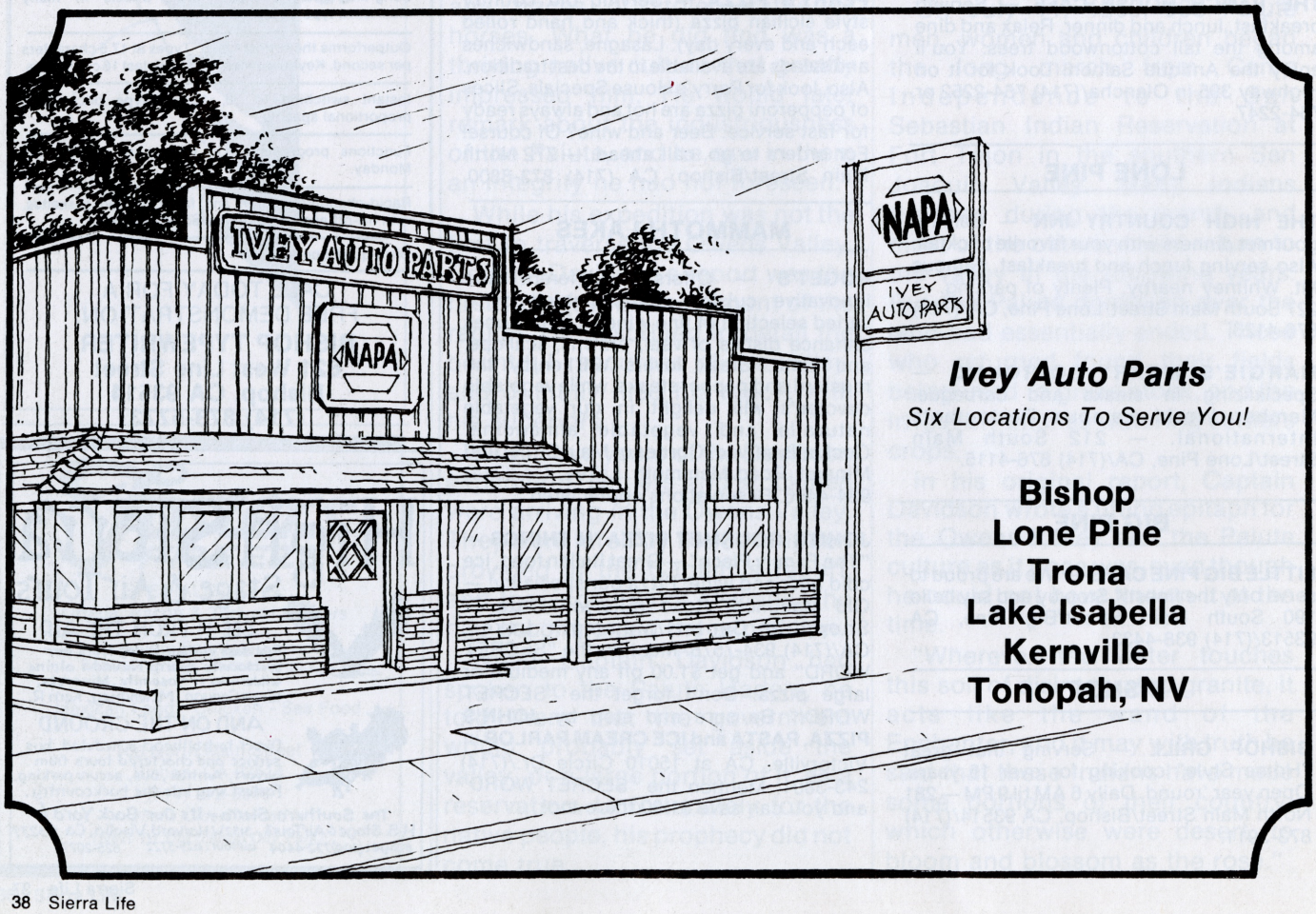
As what may be a last faint hope, the inscription has been sent to Michael Kraus, Director of the Alaska Native Language Center, at the University of Alaska, on the chance someone has adapted the Cyrillic to an Alaskan tongue.

If that doesn't work, you the readers of this article, are positively the last hope.

Sincerely,
Burrell C. Dawson

Here is the inscription —





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Tonopah, NV

Events . . .

MOJAVE

Many local events planned. Call (805) 824-2481

KERNVILLE

October 17 — Rodeo - Flying U Rodeo Circuit. Crowning of Queen and Barbeque on Sunday.

RIDGECREST

October 17th and 18th — 2nd Annual Maturango Junction Chili Cook-Off. For further information call (714) 446-6900.

Through October 30th — Maturango Museum Art Show, "Reflections of an Enduring West." Featured artists: Leo Nowak, Francilu Hansen and Don McCauley. Call (714) 446-6900 for further information.

November 14th — Miss Ridgecrest Beauty Pagent. Call Barbara Dewitt at (714) 446-7584 for further information.

10/17 Mini-triathalon - 1/2 mile swim; 25 mile bike ride and 6.2 mile run. Sign ups start 7:00 a.m. $7.00 pre-entry fee. $9.00 entry fee on day of event. Mugs presented to all participants. Contact Scotty Broyles (714) 939-2334 or Chuck Lewis 375-9580.

10/24-28 The Sierra Desert Art Association of Bishop is sponsoring a Painting Workshop by the Nationally known artist and painting instructor Milford Zornes,A.N.N., A.W.S. For further information call Margaret Dawson, Lone Pine 876-5470.

DEATH VALLEY

November 12th thru 15th — 32nd Annual Death Valley Encampment. No admission charge. Four memorable days in the heart of "America's Desert Wonderland." Check with your local Auto Club for brochure, or call the Bishop Chamber of Commerce at (714) 873-8405 for further details.

BISHOP

October thru November — Fall Colors! A "must" for photographers and artists. Call the Bishop Chamber of Commerce at (714) 873-8405

MAMMOTH LAKES

October 30th — Snow Dance. Caboose parking lot in Mammoth Lakes (Next to the Captain's Table restaurant). Live entertainment, hot spiced wine, beer or cider. Traditional burning of the Farmer's Almanac and skis on the

continued on page 42

SIERRA SADDLERY

THE VALLEY'S ONE-STOP HEADQUARTERS FOR:
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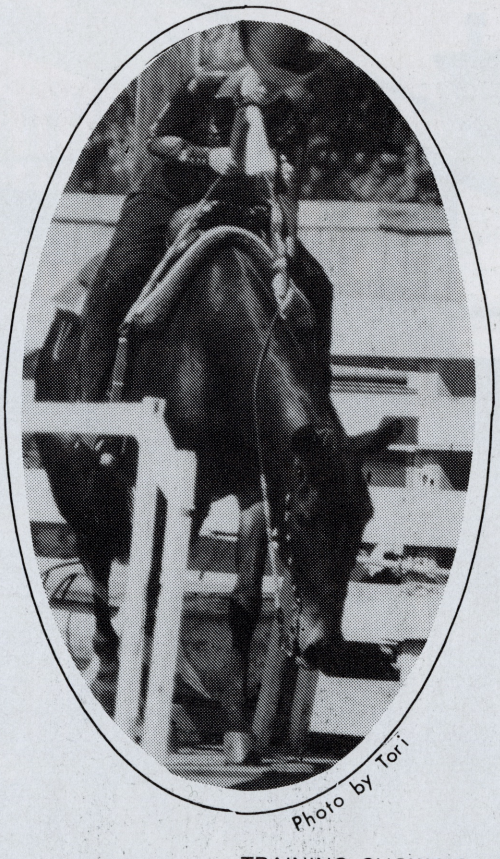
Photo by Tori

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High Country Homes . . .

California is well known for its beautiful homes. Some of the most outstanding homes in the state are found in the High Sierra.

This beautiful High Sierra home is located in Mammoth Lakes within walking distance to Chair 15. Every detail shows "Old World" craftsmanship not found in many homes built today. The all-wood interior features walls that are perfectly mitered, doing away with the need for molding.

The exterior south wall is faced with natural rock as part of its passive solar design. A multitude of windows capture the warm winter sun and the magnificent views of Mammoth Mountain, the Sherwins and the White Mountains above Bishop.

Pease turn to page 42

Through the use of wood and natural rock, This beautiful 4,000 square foot Mammoth Lakes home is designed to blend perfectly with its environment.

Photography by Tim Snyder

The interior of the home features all wood walls that are perfectly mitered at all corners.

Bring the Sierra
into your home . . .

. . . the beautiful work of

Peggy Gray

reflects the many moods of
the magnificent High Sierra

1982 Sierra Painting Workshops
Bishop - Early June and Late August
Wilderness Pack Trip & Workshop - Late July

The works of Peggy Gray will be on exhibit November 27 thru 30th at the Happy Dragon "Fine Arts Annex" - 174 West Line St., Bishop, CA

Please call or write for free brochure.
373 Mt. Tom Road
Bishop, CA 93514
(714) 873-3055
Showings Upon Request

Mammoth Work of Art *from page 40*

This luxurious home has over 4,000 square feet of living space which includes five bedrooms and five baths. The master suite is located on the upper level of the house and has a completely tiled bath equipped with a sauna.

The functional island kitchen has hardwood floors and microwave, convection and conventional ovens. The home is also equipped with central vacuum and intercom systems.

The large living room with fireplace is perfect for entertaining friends on a cold winter evening. The house also has two timberline woodburning stoves that efficently heat the entire home.

A huge recreation area is located on the lower level. The home is also equipped with automatic garage door openers.

You'll enjoy the privacy offered by this beautifully landscaped estate nestled among the pines in one of the worlds most exclusive ski resorts. The home is offered by Don Rogers of Resort Properties, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93514 / (714)934-6878. Call for additional information.

EVENTS *continued*

sacrificial fire. Dancing! Don't miss it 6:30 PM until 9:30 PM with Crowning of Snow Goose and Gander at 8:30 PM.

HAWTHORNE

November 8th — Lion's Jog. Call Carolyn Masayko at (702) 945-2087 for details.

COLEVILLE

October 17th — Lion's Club 18th Annual Deer Hunter's Barbeque and Dance. Live music by the Alpine Trio. Walker Community Building. Fun starts at 5 PM. Call Dan McCourtney at (916) 495-2382 for further information.

CARSON CITY

October 30th and 31st — Nevada Days! Parade, Nevada Days Ball on evening of the 30th. Drilling contest. Lots of fun for the entire family. Call (702) 882-0311 for further informaion.

VIRGINIA CITY

Many community events planned. Call (702) 847-1565 for further information.

Sierra Kitchen . . .

STUFFED VENISON STEAKS

4 thick venison steaks
Salt and pepper to taste
Red pepper to taste
1 clove of garlic, halved
Prepared mustard
1/2 c. chopped green onion
1/2 c. chopped green pepper
1/2 c. diced celery
1/2 c. chopped onion
1/4 c. margarine
2 c. bread crumbs
1 egg, slightly beaten
1/4 c. cooking sherry

Slit steaks on sides; season with salt, pepper and red pepper. Rub with garlic and mustard. Let stand for several hours. Saute vegetables in half the margarine until limp. Add bread crumbs and egg. Stuff each steak with dressing mixture. Hold steaks together by sewing ends or secure with toothpicks. Brown each steak in remaining margarine until golden brown; place in baking dish. Pour sherry over steaks. Bake for about 1 hour at 350 degrees or until tender. Yield: 4 servings.

ROAST VENISON IN COFFEE

1 venison roast
Cloves of garlic, slivered
Onions, slivered
1 c. vinegar
2 c. coffee
Salt and pepper to taste

Cut slits in venison; insert garlic and onion slivers. Pour vinegar over venison; marinate for 24 to 48 hours, turning occasionally. Brown venison on all sides in Dutch oven. Pour coffee over venison; add 2 cups water. Simmer for 4 hours or until venison is tender. Season well with salt and pepper. Simmer for 20 minutes longer.

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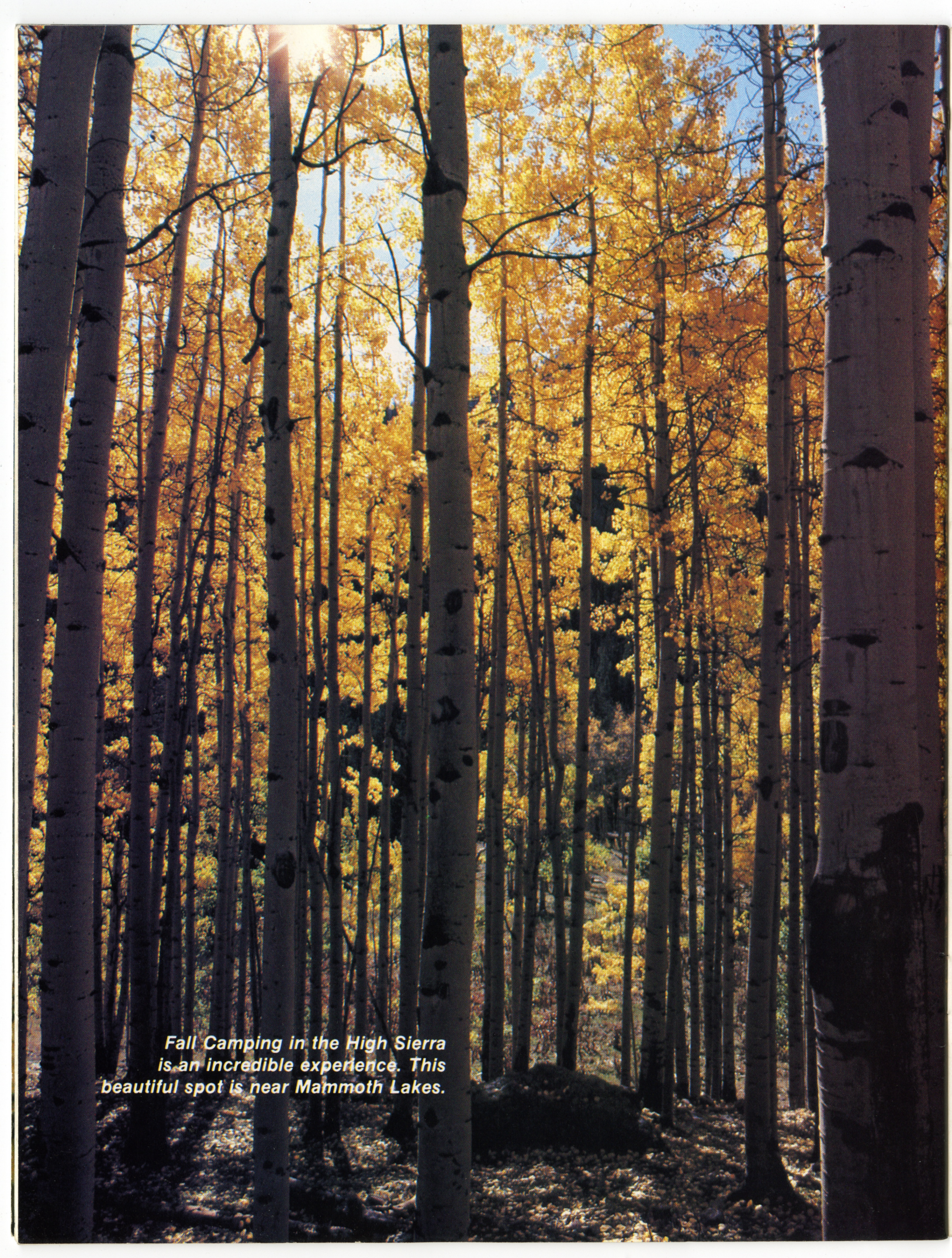

Fall Camping in the High Sierra is an incredible experience. This beautiful spot is near Mammoth Lakes.

Fall Camping

Autumn in the High Sierra is an incredible experience. The backcountry is ablaze with crimson, gold and orange. The brilliant colors of fall move down through the canyons, a little closer to the valley floor each day.

Autumn truly is the best time of all to enjoy the High Sierra. Many campgrounds remain open during this time of year for public use.

FOREST SERVICE CAMPGROUNDS:

MT. WHITNEY AREA:
Whitney Portal (closes Oct. 30)
Lone Pine Campground (Halfway up Whitney Portal Road.)

BISHOP CREEK AREA:
Four Jeffrey, Intake Two, Bishop Park.

ROCK CREEK AREA:
Tuff, Rock Creek Camp, East Fork, Pine Grove, Rock Creek Lake, Mosquito Flat, McGee Creek (Upper Cottonwood only).

BIG PINE CREEK AREA:
Grandview.

If you plan to camp in areas north of the Rock Creek area, check with area Ranger Districts in advance as closures due to weather conditions are possible.

Lone Pine Area —
(714) 876-5542
Bishop Area
(714) 873-4207
Mammoth Lakes Area —
(714) 934-2505
Mono Lake Area —
(714) 647-6525

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Photographed by Paul Lauten

Autumn in the Sierra!
Don't miss it!
Call for complete details on "Fall Colors" in the High Sierra
Bishop Chamber of Commerce
690 North Main Street
Bishop, California 93514
(714) 873-8405

This beautiful autumn scene was shot at Rock Creek near Tom's Place. Photography by Patty Van Dolson

FINALLY:
A HIGH PERFORMANCE DRAG THAT WON'T CHATTER, JERK OR FREEZE UP.

THE SMOOTH NEW 6000's FROM ZEBCO.

You've hooked a fish, set the drag, and dug in for a real fight.

Every fisherman's been there. Wondering if the line is going to feed out smooth and taut. If a sudden run will snap the line. Or if the drag will fail just before the fish runs out of fight.

With any of the new 6000 Series skirted spool spinning reels from Zebco, you don't have to think about the drag performance. You can count on it. So the battle's with the fish, not with your reel.

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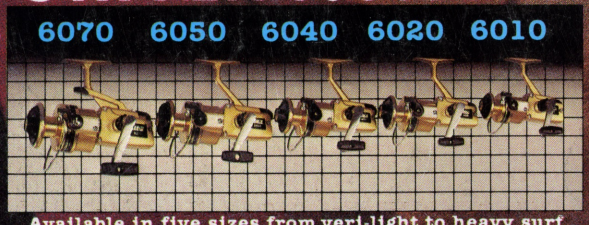

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